Official Development Assistance in the Eye of the Participants: Adapting Process Approach theory to Korea's ODA in Rwanda

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Abstract: This paper calls for the adaptation of a more flexible approach, the Process approach, to Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects initiated by the Korean government and Korean corporations. ODA has been around for decades providing aid to developing countries under the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Despite such long history of development aid, Republic of Korea's ODA is relatively new only joining DAC in 2010. As a new member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) there is evidence of a lack of development thinking in its ODA projects as projects are carried out in traditional Blueprint approaches. This paper introduces Process approach theory as a way to complement conventional Blueprint approach to increase sustainability, impact and ownership of development projects.

Most recent focus of ODA is on 'Aid Effectiveness' and there has already been much criticism on its 'effectiveness' to developing countries. However, 'Aid Effectiveness' does put focus back on the recipient stressing 'ownership', alignment', 'harmonisation', 'managing results', 'mutual accountability' as key words. This goes much in line with the process approach that this paper suggests to adapt in Korea's ODA projects as a complementary approach.

Engagement in projects seen in the 'Rwanda ICT Training Centre project' of the case study, that combines infrastructure and education, traditional blueprint approach needs to be complemented by a 'Process Approach' of which there is still a lack of understanding among Korean project managers and Korean bureaucrats. Results of the research methodology shows that not all of the 'Process Approach' can be adapted to Korea's ODA projects but more of a 'Managerialist' approach, for example a 'Process in blueprint Approach' can be implemented providing some flexibility to its projects and providing opportunities to think about sustainability in the eyes of the participants.

1. INTRODUCTION

Process Approach is a theory and practice that was brought about to the world of development projects to overcome the limitation of conventional Blueprint type projects in the 1980s and 1990s (Bond & Hulme 1999; Korten 1980; Rondellini 1993) to improve project success that is in the context of development thinking and bring about lasting sustainable results to the recipient countries. This paper researches past process approach theories and examines whether a process approach can be adapted to the project level of official development assistance (ODA). Parts of the process approach, most notably beneficiary participation and ownership, have been taken up by donor agencies since the 'Paris declaration on Aid Effectiveness' in 2005. Process approach, which focuses on the project level of ODA is examined with contrast to conventional blueprint type projects as well as comparing the two different approaches to the theory, the 'purist' and the 'managerialist'.

2. PROCESS APPROACH?

Why Process approach

Since late 1960s and 1970s new focus has been put on projects as 'building blocks' of development. Projects were seen as efficient tools of development where resources were converted into improved welfare for developing countries. "Donor agencies saw them as neat fundable development efforts that did not rely on a functioning bureaucracy" (Chimhowu 2012). By 1980s the World Bank reported that 51% of all its projects ended up in failure (Chimhowu 2012; Meltzer 2001), which was in line with much of the criticism and scepticism on ODA at the time. A new approach in carrying out projects was needed to overcome the failures of conventional blueprint type approaches to development projects within the developing countries' context and "increase effectiveness and long-term sustainability of development interventions through the involvement of local people, NGOs or private sector agencies" (Mosse *et al.* 1998). Hence the process approach.

Limitations to conventional blueprint type projects

Some of the characteristics shown by blueprint type projects are that they have a beginning and an end, and have constraints on time, funding and scope. Such projects have been highly successful in meeting unique goals and objectives as seen in early NASA projects as well as infrastructure projects using pre-defined plans (Maylor 2010). However, in the development context, which is often seen as messy, conflict ridden, and dynamic (Edwards 1999, Johnston & Clark 1982) it often faced limitations. Blueprint type projects in development seen in the early stages of ODA projects were often large and complex, as this was believed to produce economies of scale. Such large projects funded by ODA were often unnecessarily costly and much emphasis was put on technical and expert control and sticking to the design where planning and implementation were separated phases, and implementation merely following planning. Korean ODA projects still to this day take on such form.

Blueprint is an approach where a detailed plan is prepared at the beginning, which is implemented following the fixed 'blueprint' design and schedule of the project with all uncertainties removed that follows a distinctive Faludi (1973)'s rational comprehensive model (Dale 2004; Chimhowu 2012; Mosse *et al.* 1998). However, development projects are complex, often unpredictable, and different depending on the local

context and greatly influenced by social, cultural, political, and financial elements that organisations cannot fully manage. These variables have as much influence as the plans and inputs to projects.

Uphoff (1992) also suggests that in carrying out development projects, more Chaos Theory thinking is needed where small causes can have large effects such as the butterfly effect and less mechanical thinking, because "Common sense and experience tells us that the simple project model is dangerously far from reality; that the relationship between inputs and outputs is not linear; that responses to inputs are often non proportional, that action generates unpredictable effects and that the same inputs under similar conditions do not always produce the same results" (Korten 1989; Mosse *et al.* 1998).

Process approach as an alternative?

Process Approach is a reaction to the ineffectiveness of blueprint in diverse complex environments, especially in developing countries context, as it aims to cope with phenomenon that is constantly changing. Dale (2004) suggests that planning in process approach is different from conventional blueprint approach as it implies that plans are not finalized or specified fully prior to the start up of implementation. Certain amount of planning is carried out even in the implementation and monitoring stage of the project interactively with other stages of the project. Edwards (1999: 206) points out three key factors that are relevant to the process approach. The key factors mentioned are 'Learning', 'Accountability', and 'Incentives', which intend to strengthen development organizations and practitioners to better manage projects in a real world full of "uncertainty, diversity, local control, and extended timescales" to close "the gap between rhetoric and reality". Oxfam UK's learning fund, and 'Social Audit' programmes used by New Economics Foundation, an NGO, and Oxfam UK are given as good examples in promoting such key factors.

Bond and Hulme (1999) sums up the features of a process approach as participation, learning and flexibility. The learning process that is supported by institutions links beneficiary participation and project management flexibility. Some characteristics compiled on different academic research in the area mentions 'Flexible and phased implementation', 'Learning from experience', 'Beneficiary Participation', 'Institutional support, Programme management' where practical examples applicable to development projects are identified.

Table 1
Table of Five main elements for Process approach

Main characteristics	Sub characteristics	Explanation
Flexible and phased implementation	Start small and expand Long time frames	Use of pilot projects. Reduce risk and increase success. 10 to 20 years needed for poverty reduction, economic growth effect.
	Experimentation	Flexibility of method, finance, HR is experimented and if successful carried into further action.
	Action learning cycles	Rolling planning is used as activities take place depending on experience from earlier learning cycles.
Learning from experience	Embracing error	An organisational culture that embraces error can help learn from previous mistakes.
	Linking implementation with planning	Link between the two stages help lessons learnt from implementation to be added to the planning stage.

contd. table 1

Main characteristics	Sub characteristics	Explanation
	Iterative improvement of small interventions	Repeatedly applying lessons learnt to on-going or new initiatives in projects.
	Using learning process approach	Lessons learnt goes through effective → efficient → expand stages to make desired impact (Korten 1980).
	Learn from local knowledge	Learning from local culture, knowledge and environment helps to choose technologies that are appropriate to the local context.
Beneficiary Participation	Embrace local people in problem analysis	Local people are the ones who know best about local situations and environments as well as problems.
	Planning and decision-making	Including local people in planning and decision-making can make projects sustainable in the long term.
	Resource mobilization and implementation	Mobilising local resources can help reduce external costs and increase sense of ownership. In addition help them maintain the asset long after it is built.
	Monitoring and evaluation	Participating locals in monitoring and evaluation stages of the project ensures acceptability of the project and lead to higher satisfaction of the locals.
	Empower beneficiaries	Local participation in development projects can help locals increase capacity and help take on self-initiated development in the future.
Institutional support	Political support	National, local support is essential to the success of the project
	Use of permanent institutions	Use of existing agencies to increase sustainability instead of temporary well established project management teams.
	Local capacity building	Building institution and individual capacity is important
	Organisational change	To help development continue reform is at times needed
	Facilitating beneficiary organisation	Participation of private, commercial and NGOs of beneficiaries should be encouraged that will build a strong civil base.
Programme management	Well-qualified and motivated leadership	Flexibility and complexity of projects require strong leadership.
	New professionalism	Key facilitators' quality interventions are important in managing process approach project (Chambers 1993).
	Retention of key staff	Key staff should be kept so that lessons learnt are not lost and adopted into the projects.
	Variety of short-term technical assistance	Ability to provide short-term consultation is needed to cope with complex problems in the field.
	Project management team with flexible, informal approach	Project management team must be free to develop a flexible, innovative and informal approach so as to avoid becoming bureaucratic.
	Creative management	Creativity is needed to tackle problems in a continually changing world of development
	Inter-organisational coordination	Good coordination is needed especially when there are many agencies and stakeholders involved in the project.

[*Source:* Bond and Hulme (1999)]

Blue print vs. Process approach

Some keywords of blueprint and process approach have been identified in the table below. A process approach takes a bottom-up structure that has open goals that stresses participation by seeing local people as partners rather than mere beneficiaries, and continuous improvements made by embracing and learning from errors to bring about sustained improvements and performances.

Table 2
Blueprint vs. Process approach characteristics

Category	Blueprint	Process Approach
Goals	Pre-set, closed	Evolving, open
Outputs	Infrastructure	Capabilities
Keyword	Planning	Participation
Structure	Top-down	Bottom-up
Methods, rules	Standardized, universal	Diverse, local
Professionals' interactions with local people	Instructing, motivating	Enabling, empowering
Local people seen as	Beneficiaries	Partners
Force flow	Supply-push	Demand-pull
Technology	Fixed package	Varied basket
First steps	Data collection and plan	Awareness and action
Implementation	Rapid, widespread	Gradual, local, at people's pace
Management focus	Spending budgets, completing projects on time	Sustained improvement and performance
Evaluation	External, intermittent	Internal, continuous
Error	Buried, mitigated	Embraced

[*Source:* Korten (1980), Chambers (1993), World Bank (2000)]

Another major difference is in the project cycle. A blueprint project cycle would start with identification that goes through the preparation stage where everything is decided, and moves on to appraisal, implementation and evaluation stage where it normally terminates and lessons learnt not manifested in future projects as it is a one off project. Process approach however involves a continuously evolving and learning project cycle where plans made are reviewed after implementation and reflected back to further adjust plans and project activities.

Past and Present studies on process approach

Adopting process approach to development projects came popular in the 1980s (Bond & Hulme 1999, Korten 1980, Rondinelli 1983). Some of the features different from conventional project style were "experimentation, flexibility, building local capacities and organic expansion" (Bond & Hulme 1999). Some parts of such ideas were used by donor agencies, recipient countries, and non-government organisations (NGOs) in the 1990s (Edwards 1999, Eyben 1991, Mosse *et al.* 1998) in planning and implementing projects, with evidence of successful long-term project outcomes by Norwegian Agency for Development
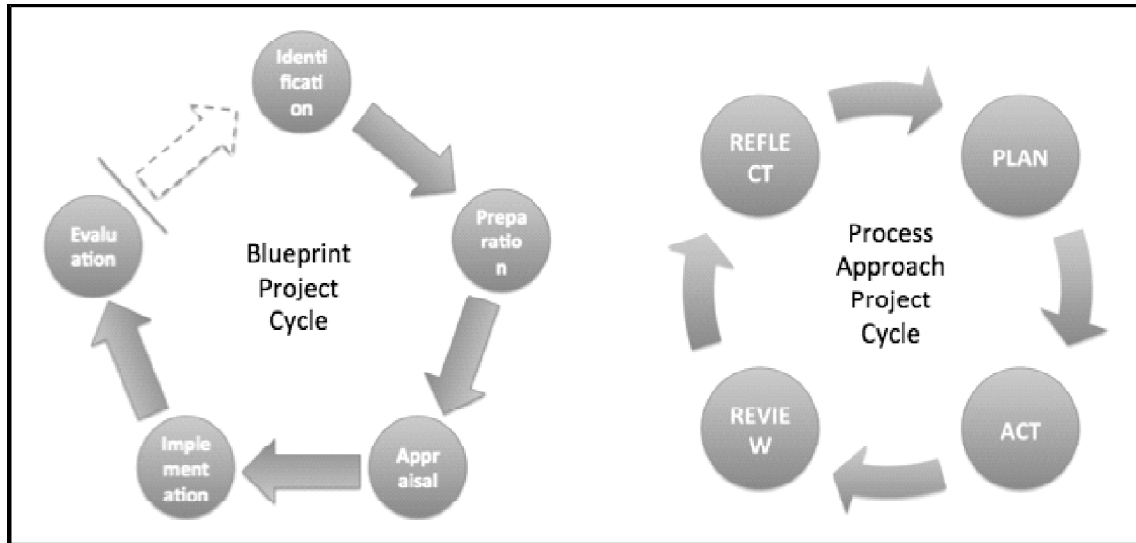
Figure 1: Project Cycle: Blueprint vs. Process Approach

[*Source:* Chimhowu (2012)]

Cooperation (NORAD)'s funding of a Sri Lanka project carried out by Bond and Hulme (1999), and Macadam *et al.* (1995) in Nepal funded by ADB. Both of the projects lasted 20 years, a period that is often recommended to reach sustainability of the projects, however it is not easy to adapt such long periods to real life blueprint projects and it is not easy to get donor funding for such long periods of time. Difficulty to adapt the process approach may have been the reason why it has been difficult to find literature related to the subject in 2000s apart from Walton and Heeks (2011) adopting of process approach to ICT in development. Due to such limitation in adapting an ideal process approach, the more realistic views were taken on by other academics.

Two Schools of Thought on Process Approach: Purist vs. Managerialist

The Process approach itself can be largely divided into two groups, the 'Purists' school of thought by academics such as "Korten (1980) and Chambers (1997) who emphasized beneficiary participation and learning, and in the abandonment of the concept of projects" and minimal roles for external actors and resources (Bond and Hulme 1999: 1340). 'Managerialists' school categorises Brinkerhoff and Ingle (1989), Rondinelli (1993), Sweet and Weisel (1979) who recognised the importance of external actors but agree with the Purists that managers and management structure should be more flexible and adaptive (Bond & Hulme 1999).

Observations and suggestions: Challenges in using Process Approach

Process approach, depending on the views toward development projects, has been seen sometimes as an alternative to traditional project management approaches and at other times as complementary means to the conventional blueprint type projects. With NGOs taking the more idealistic 'Purist' approach and donor agencies taking on the more realistic 'Managerialist' approach, these approaches are examined in the case study part of the paper. Process approach can take many forms where it can be included in Blue print, Blue print in Process approach, Process to Blue print and Blue print to Process approach depending on the development project undertaken.
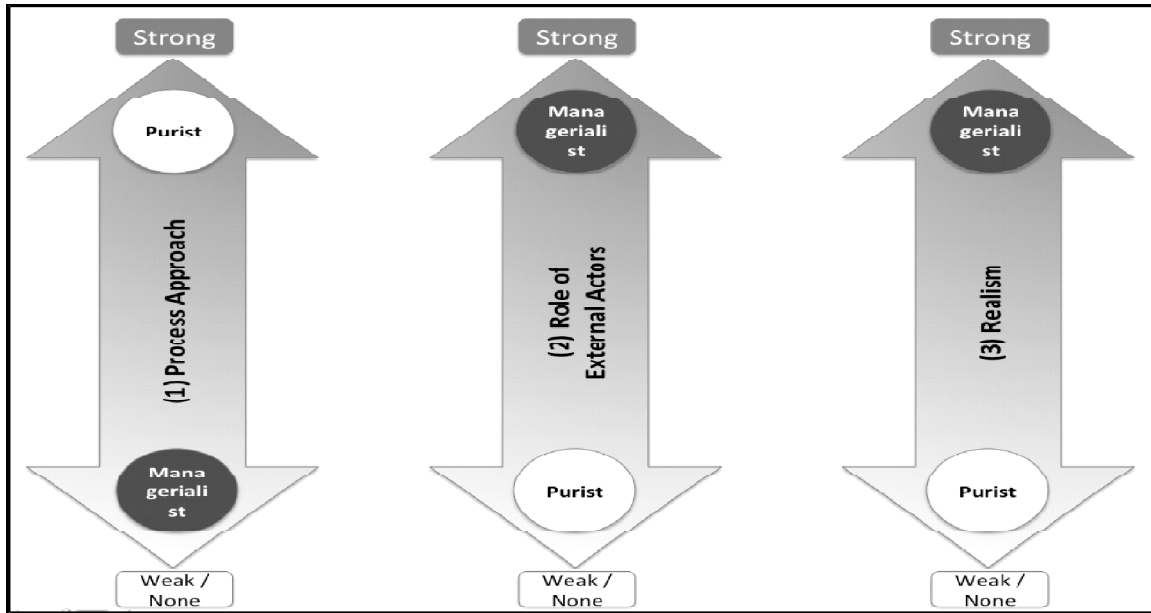
Figure 2: Purist vs. Managerialist in Process Approach

[*Source:*Bond and Hulme (1999)]

Dale (2004) and Mosse *et al.* (1998) state that process approach is not intended to replace conventional Blueprint projects, but depending on the nature of the project can be more Process approach or more Blueprint approach. Process approach is intended to complement existing methods of development projects. Whether using a full or a partial process approach, it is not easy to adapt some of the elements to conventional projects as observed by Mosse *et al.* (1998), that "there has been a tendency for conventional tools of projects to ignore process approach elements and to treat projects as closed, controllable and unchanging systems". Adapting a process approach on Korea's ODA project will be challenging. Mosse *et al.* (1998: 120) argues that "Currently both donor and government procedures are usually driven by expenditure targets that have to be met within financial years. These need to become considerably more flexible if they are to meet process requirements". Typically, ODA projects are divided into different stages where different entities carry out different stages of the project. For example, in an EDCF[1] project, identification, preparation (Feasibility Study and consultancy), appraisal, implementation and evaluation are all done by different organizations. Once plan and design of a project is set during identification and preparation stage in reality there is little room to change this during appraisal and especially implementation stage. Another obstacle observed is the amount of development experts in Korea, and among project managers and bureaucrats who are involved in ODA projects and ODA policies.

3. POSSIBLE USAGE OF PROCESS APPROACH ON KOREA'S ODA PROJECT IN RWANDA: RWANDA ICT TRAINING CENTRE PROJECT

Introduction to the project: the big picture.

Korea Telecom (KT) has implemented Korea ODA projects for more than 20 years in the field of ICT, both through grant aid (KOICA[2]) and loan aid (EDCF). KT's ODA projects are mostly comprised of ICT

infrastructure projects, such as building internet broadband networks and data centres, and it uses the traditional project management tools, which it has found effective as all projects have finished within time and budget. Rwanda ICT training centre project is a planned project to be funded by Korea ODA to the government of Rwanda. Rwanda ICT training centre project combines the traditional ICT infrastructure with that of educational programmes. Rwanda ICT training centre project is different from the former infrastructure projects that KT have implemented as education is linked to the national education policy and planning, and as education and training is primarily focused on ICT means that the contents of education and training can continuously change as ICT trends change at a very fast rate which must be considered when conducting such projects that often take long periods of time to develop and complete.

Korea's ODA to Africa and Rwanda

ODA is a major source of support to the country as Rwanda relies heavily on ODA as its level of external aid flows and projected growth correlation shows (World Bank 2013).

Considering that Africa has approximately 68% of the 'Least Developed Countries' (LDCs) designated by UN, it receives a very low amount of ODA from Korea of 15.5% of its total ODA in 2010 (Asia received 65.2% of Korea's ODA in 2010 despite having smaller number of LDCs). However, such ODA trend is changing as Korea has continuously increased its aid to Africa since 2005, which is expected to further increase following Korea's announcement in 2009 to double its ODA to Africa by 2012. This commitment was later reaffirmed during the Korea Africa Economic Cooperation Ministerial Conferences that were held in Korea 2010 where it was announced that the loan programme of Korea's ODA, EDCF, will be doubled to 1.1 billion USD in the next five years (AfDB 2010; Korea Times 2009). Korea's ODA to Africa was US$ 97 million in 2009 and reached US$ 366 million in 2015. It is expected that Korea's ODA to Rwanda will also be affected increasing more ODA to the country (Korea's ODA to Rwanda was a little over US$ 2 million in 2009 and reached US$ 21 million in 2015 taking up nearly 6% of ODA to Africa) (OECD 2017).

Korea's first development assistance to Rwanda started in 1991 at an amount of 127,000 USD and apart from the three gap years between 1997 and 1999 due to Korea's economic turmoil, Korea has so far provided 12.5 Million USD through KOICA's Grant aid programme. Much of its aid has been through KOICA's technical assistance by means of dispatching Korean volunteers and technical experts to Rwanda and inviting Rwanda government officials to Korea. However, the amount of aid has gradually risen since 2006 with four large projects taking place from 2007 and onwards in the form of Grant projects amounting to 7.5 million USD.

Background to the project

Rwanda ICT Training Centre project was first initiated in 2009 by Rwanda Development Board (RDB) as part of the establishment of a Regional Centre of Excellence (CoE) that focused on new models of education, research and development, and commercialization of ICT. Its aim was to foster economic competitiveness and sustainable development in Rwanda through the investment of human capital and support the development of ICT skills required to achieve a knowledge-based economy that first began in 2007. The Government of Rwanda, Ministry of Education and Ministry of ICT, have strategically collaborated with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) to provide quality education. CMU has been selected

due to its reputation in the field of computer science and ICT, and it role was to support the institutional and program content design, together with provision of high level teaching staff. African Development Bank (AfDB) signed a memorandum to finance the project especially in the areas of infrastructure and provision of relevant equipment. As CMU concentrated on the academic research side of the ICT skills development, RDB needed to develop a project to concentrate on the vocational training of ICT skills to develop technicians and experts to run the ICT facilities that were being built by KT which will be explained later. Also due to its limitation in national budget, it looked for an ODA funded project.

Major Participants: Korea Telecom (KT)

Korea Telecom, or KT Corporation is a South Korean fixed and wireless telecommunication service provider. KT as a public company has deployed vast advanced ICT infrastructure and services across the country helping Korea to excel in the sector and contribute to its economic growth. The company was privatised in 2002 but still has strong relations with the Korean government as it has Universal Service Obligation (USO) to provide communication to rural and isolated areas of Korea. It is also one of the major players in implementing Korea's ODA projects in developing countries with experiences in numerous ICT projects overseas on behalf of Korea's ODA (KOICA and EDCF). Its main strength lies in constructing ICT infrastructure, and transferring of operation and maintenance knowledge/experience; however, it has limited experience in social infrastructure development projects. Korea's reputation and comparative advantage in ICT infrastructure construction, operation and maintenance has helped KT to earn multiple private contracts in Rwanda (AfDB 2011).

To date, KT has implemented six ICT infrastructure construction projects in Rwanda on a private contract with RDB. Rwanda, being a land locked country needed to construct backbone ICT networks that could help assist Rwanda in its economic growth. KT has been involved in initiating and implementing various projects in Rwanda that first began in 2007. A total of six projects were carried out with RDB under Vision 2020, Rwanda government's long-term development programme to achieve economic growth and poverty reduction, and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), which provides a medium term framework for the country.

Rwanda government chose to adopt and promote ICT to support its national growth and ICT has modernized Rwanda's Banking sector, strengthen financial inclusion of the people as well as helped transform other sectors such as private sector, agriculture sector and health sector according to the World Bank (2013).

Collaboration with KT was made possible partly due to Korea's successful economic turn around and its reputation in the ICT sector made possible by heavy government investment (Lim 2010) which has resulted in Korea ranking high in many of UN's ICT indicators such as UN's e-Government readiness index, ICT Development Index (IDI[3]), etc.

Rwanda Development Board (RDB)

The Rwanda Development Board is a government body that oversees investment promotion and implementation in Rwanda. Its main role is to manage assets and businesses as well as human capital and institutional development. It's an independent organisation that reports directly to the President and is

guided by a Board that includes all the key Ministers. Its mission is to enable private sector growth through economic development with local and foreign investors. It is made up of five clusters, 'Tourism', 'ICT', Trade and Manufacturing', 'Services' and 'Agriculture' (RDB 2012). In the case study it is the potential project owner. ICT department of RDB (RDB-ICT), a department in charge of ICT related issues works closely with the Ministry of ICT.

Six projects between KT and Rwanda Government (RDB)

A short explanation on the six previous projects implemented by KT on a private contract with RDB is necessary as it is a strong link to the ICT training centre construction project initiative. KT has implemented a total of six projects in Rwanda, five being private contract projects and two being a Public Private Partnership (PPP) project.

The first project was to construct a Mobile WIMAX network and a fibre optic cable network in Rwanda's capital Kigali that began in 2007 and completed in 2009. Second project was to construct the National Backbone Network of Rwanda that was carried out in two phases. Phase one of the project was to link Rwanda's major cities with 5 surrounding countries giving Rwanda access to the submarine cable network, and phase two of the project that will link Kigali and 30 districts of Rwanda.

The third project was a small Public Private Partnership (PPP) project with KOICA to build a primary school with 6 classrooms that could take in 250 students on a two-hectare land in the Musambira sector in Kamonyi district near Kigali. A total budget of 200,000 USD was shared between KOICA and KT to help Rwanda improve its education environment as it strived to build new schools to accommodate due to primary school becoming mandatory education. It began in February of 2010 and completed in March 2011. The project however took on a very Corporate Social Responsibility[4] (CSR) character to tighten the ties with the Rwanda government.

Fourth project was to provide management and operation consulting to BSC (Broadband Systems Corporation Limited), a Rwanda government owned company that was set up to operate and maintain the new ICT infrastructure built by KT that included Mobile Wimax network, fiber optic cable network and national backbone network. Fifth project was to build an information and cybersecurity centre and the sixth project was to build a 4G LTE network by setting up a joint venture between KT and the government of Rwanda with both sides having shares in the company. This 4G LTE network is a wholesale network to promote a new technology at the time into the major cities and also rural areas that existing mobile operators would not venture into due to profitability.

All six projects are of blueprint project in nature where implementation, operation and maintenance are the only factors involved in the project. There is no monitoring and there is no evaluation or other developmental thinking involved.

'The Project': ICT training centre

Having completed six infrastructure projects (some are still under progress), the new ICT training centre construction project looked very different compared to the previous ones. Although it was partly an infrastructure construction project as it involved constructing two buildings with floor area of 10,000 m^2 and each building being five and two stories high with various training rooms with ICT related equipment

Year	Project	Details
2013	**4G LTE Network construction and operation** (PPP. On-going)	• **Period:** 2013 – 2037 (25 years)
2012	**Information & Cybersecurity Centre construction** (On-going)	• **Period:** 2012 – 2018 (7 years)
2011	**BSC Managed service** (Management & Operation Consulting)	• **Budget:** USD 2 million • **Period:** 2011 – 2013 (4 years)
2010	**Wimana Primary School construction** (PPP + CSR)	• **Kamonyi district** • **Budget:** USD 0.2 million • **Period:** 2010 – 2011 (2 years)
2010	**National Backbone Network construction** (Phase 2)	• **Kigali & 30 districts of Rwanda** • **Budget:** USD 56 million • **Period:** 2010 -2014 (5 years)
2008	**National Backbone Network construction** (Phase 1)	• **Major cities linking 5 surrounding countries (2,300 km)** • **Budget:** USD 42 million • **Period:** 2008 – 2012 (5 years)
2007	**Mobile Wimax Network** **& Fiber Optic Cable Network construction**	• **Area:** Kigali • **Budget:** USD 8 million • **Period:** 2007 – 2010 (3 years)

Figure 3: Project initiated by KT in Rwanda (2007 – present)

[*Source:* KT Internal data and own interpretation]

for vocational training, the aim of the project was not only to build but also to rear technicians and experts in the field of ICT that required a training programme. The type of training that was required after the construction of the building had to be discussed in detail with many stakeholders. KT has in the past tried to minimize stakeholder discussions unless critically relevant to the project as it has been perceived to delay the process of the project and design of the project being changed.

There was a huge difference noted in approaching the project compared to the ICT training centre that was constructed by KT in Indonesia in 2010 and other projects in Asia where KT implemented projects based on already designed and planned by Korean consultants. However, in the Rwanda ICT training centre project RDB stressed two things; the content of the ICT training programme, and the sustainability of the ICT centre after it was built. Sustainability was an important element to RDB partly due to the recognition that many of the past projects once built by donor countries would be left to the recipient country to operate and maintain. Lack of skilled operators and the limited budget to maintain such infrastructure often left it being inefficient and ill managed that has often been the case in development projects pointed out by Meltzer (2001) and Chimhowu (2012).

Another reason for sustainability request was because of RDB's unique structure. RDB's organizational structure had two departments when working on a project. One department was in charge of attracting investment, but another department was in charge of maintaining and running the project once complete. Both departments were involved in the early stages of the project and it was the latter department that put strong emphasis on sustainability. The team was headed by the head of RDB-ICT who was mainly responsible

for attracting investment but working level of staff were from the asset management team that gave considerations to both factors.

The other part was the education programme involved in the ICT training centre project. In the past such education programmes built into the project provided a one time, short term training of 20 to 30 government officials from the recipient country to Korea, a PhD or Master level studies to 1 or 2 officials, and lastly a retired Korean professor would be dispatched to Rwanda for a year to kick start the training centre. Such programmes were never intended to serve as long-term sustainable education programmes but a mere incentive for the recipient country which would often result in elite capture. This was mainly to attract recipient countries to take on the project but also to keep the project budget under a certain level as Korea's ODA budget, although not explicitly announced, had a certain budget level depending on the sector that the project belonged to due to the small size of Korea's ODA on a single project. However, in the case of ICT training centre project in Rwanda, RDB saw the project as part of a bigger programme with CMU and for the ICT training centre to perform at a national level would require more discussions and debate about the kind of ICT skill training that was needed in the context of Rwanda but also in the global context as ICT was an industry where technology changed at a very fast pace and also embracing proven global standard and trends was important.

In an average infrastructure project involving ODA, KT would build the infrastructure and leave. Such a project includes one to two years of operation and maintenance followed by a year of warranty but sustainability was an element that KT had not faced before. Evaluation are involved in the project via ex-ante evaluation using performance indicators (during project identification and appraisal), completion evaluation (within one year of project completion) and ex-post evaluation (two years after project completion) would be carried after project completion and information available on the website but in reality evaluation is not continuously carried out during the whole project cycle (Kim 2011) especially during implementation stage. Sustainability was seen within KT's top management as something that was not within the project scope and if included would be seen as a risk to overcome. There is that lack of incentives to seriously consider sustainability as long as project is completed on time and within scope. This is a result of a long periods of rigid practices of ODA project management that has not seen much change since the very beginning. KT and Project managers were more comfortable to the conventional Blue print approach as this is how projects had been carried out.

KT had approached this project as a typical blueprint project when it required a more process approach. As this project was proposed using Korea's ODA fund, it only had to follow the Korean government format of applying to an ODA. It should also be kept in mind that KT is a fully privatised company where the aim of its organization is to create profit and keep stockholders satisfied which can collide with the concept of sustainability.

However, in this case, the result of the project initiation could have improved had it taken on a process approach to complement the conventional Blueprint approach taken. A stakeholder analysis of the case study based on literature on process approach, online questionnaire answers from Korea Telecom project manager' group in the research methodology, and from empirical perspective has been drawn into a stakeholder map. Participants are key to the project and more so as process approach stresses beneficiary participation. The map identifies stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the ICT training centre project by illustrating the different stakeholder dynamics towards the project rather than merely mapping them in an area (Jagun N.D). Stakeholder map is my own interpretation of the situation.

Figure 4 shows a general stakeholder map and it shows the current position of participants involved. RDB-ICT, sub-contract companies of KT, local companies that will provide cheap labour is designated as primary/internal stakeholders who will actually implement the project. Map is drawn from KT's perspective.
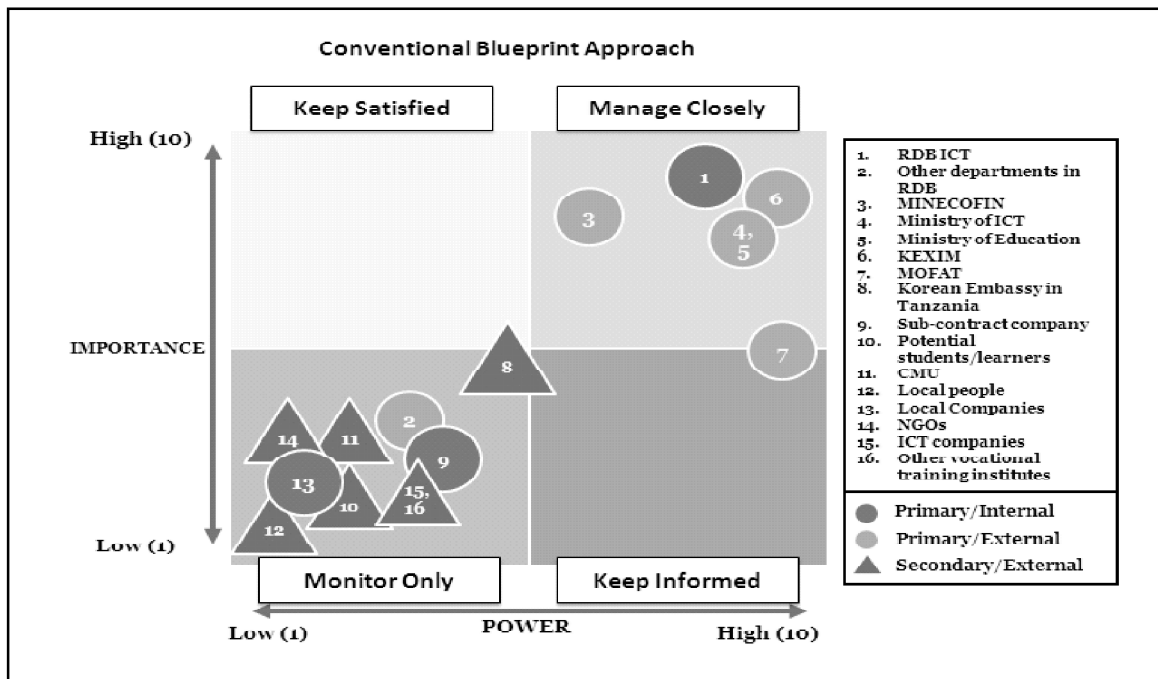

Figure 4: Stakeholder map using conventional approach (Status quo)

[*Source:* Own interpretation based on questionnaire answers from KT project managers]

Figure 5 shows stakeholder movement when a more idealistic process approach is applied. Stakeholders in the 'Monitor Only' move towards 'Manage Closely' area and vice versa as the two informal groups meet to work on the project. However, this is far too idealistic compared to reality.

In a more realistic situation, as is the case with KT, only a few who directly work on the project will move from 'Monitor Only' to 'Manage Closely' but not vice versa as government bodies especially KEXIM and MOFAT is unlikely to do so (Figure 6). Also as it is realistically difficult to have all the beneficiaries participate in the project, those who are more directly involved can be moved for example local companies can be involved not just in providing cheap labour but act as a bridge to link risks and problems that can be identified in the local context as they are more actively involved in the project.

Research Findings

The findings were based on the 8 categories asked in the Questionnaire which were 'Personal information', 'Stakeholders', 'ODA projects', Beneficiary participation', 'Project Risk & Challenges', 'Sustainability', 'Adaptability of process approach', 'Korea's ODA policy and projects'. KT was everything about blueprint and lacked knowledge and understanding on development issues related to projects, which may have been influenced by the policy. Considering that there may be more projects in the future that will involve development aspects, it would beneficial for KT and Korea's ODA policy in general to take on more development thinking. Highlights of the findings are in the table below.
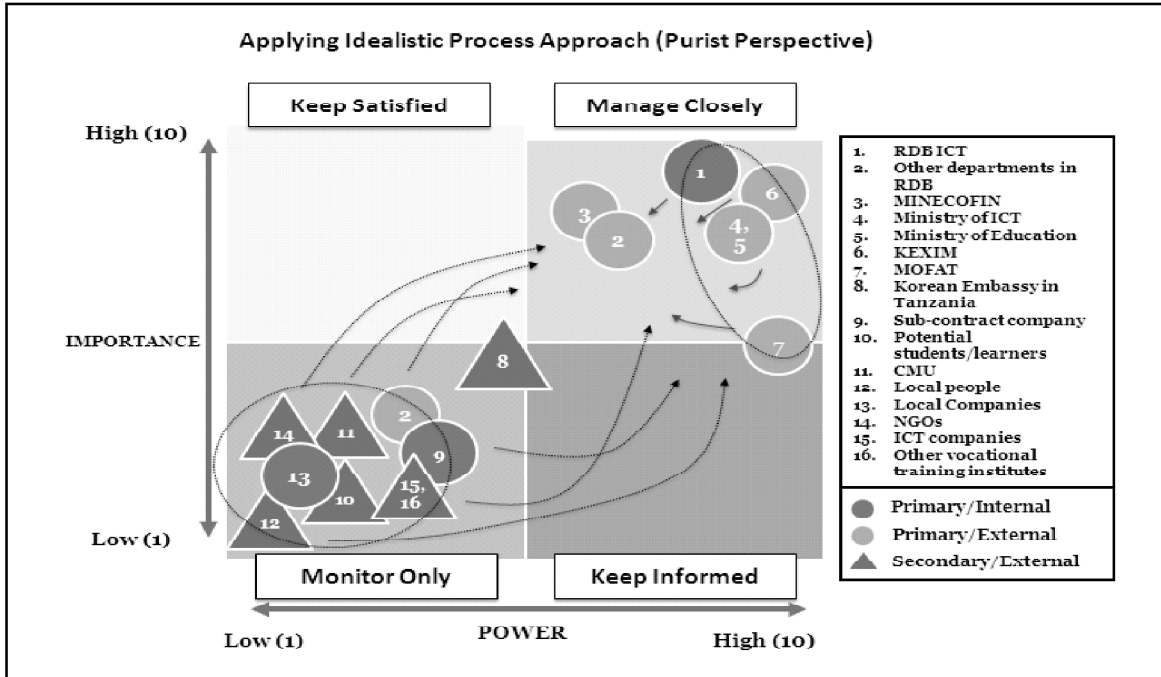
Figure 5: Stakeholder map using Idealistic process approach

[*Source:* Own interpretation based on questionnaire answers from KT project managers]
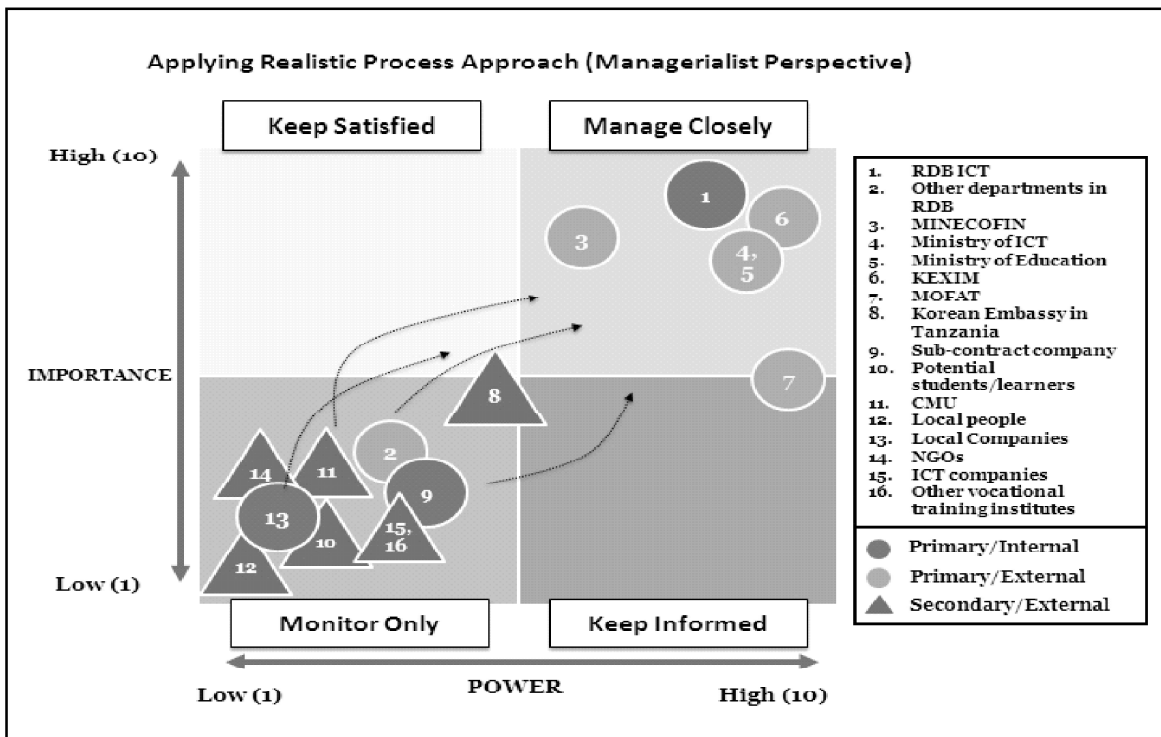

Figure 6: Stakeholder map using Realistic process approach

[*Source:* Own interpretation based on questionnaire answers from KT project managers]

Table 3
Highlights from the questionnaire to KT's ODA project managers

Category	*Highlights from the Questionnaire*
Personal information	Most interviewees were from engineering background and more comfortable with Blueprint approach. There is no one with a development background in KT's ODA project department due to the lack of recognition of development studies in Korea's ODA and Korea (including KT) in general. All interviewees were unfamiliar with development thinking.
Stakeholders	No one identified locals or beneficiaries as a stakeholder. Five of the respondents identified local partners as important stakeholders who would help project managers to mitigate political and legal risks that was out of their control.
ODA projects	All project managers worked on ICT infrastructure projects with three interviewees on ICT training centre projects. Interviewees commonly thought ODA projects aim to generate profit and create export as it exported Korean manufactured products in case of tied aid projects. Other identified answers were 'Economic growth' of Korea as a nation and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for KT.
Beneficiary participation	Locals did not generally participate in the ODA projects but when they do were considered as cheap labour force for civil works. Two interviewees pointed out that local participation would only slow down the process and should be kept at minimal or be mitigated. Although the majority recognized that local participation may be needed, they also mentioned that it was not a must process in getting ODA project approval and therefore at most of the time neglected. One interviewee pointed out that Recipient governments had not yet reached that stage of acknowledging the importance of beneficiary participation.
Risk & Challenges	Political risk, corruption of Recipient countries and bureaucracy of the Korean government involved in ODA were often mentioned. Slow process of Korea's ODA and therefore the amount of time taken from beginning to end of the project was also mentioned.
Sustainability	The concept of 'Sustainability' was differently perceived by interviewees. They were not considered important but when they were considered it was mainly related to maintenance of the project after project completion. A typical blueprint thinking. Words such as ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing results, mutual accountability that are related to Aid effectiveness were not mentioned.
Adaptability of Process approach	This category received mixed answers but the most well noted one was related to Question 2 of section A on adapting long time frames. All interviewees identified that this was difficult to take on in the current ODA project format. Such long time frame was not something that current Korea ODA donors could accept to adopt. Also interviewees found it difficult to work with other agencies in collaborating into large scale integrated problems that is noted on Japan's ODA by OECD peer review and Rocha and Denney (2011).
Korea's ODA policy and projects	In order to adopt process approach, changes had to take place by Korea ODA donors. Both KOICA and KEXIM were mentioned. More ODA experts rather than Blueprint expert were needed to adopt development thinking to current blueprint projects.

[*Source:* Summary of Questionnaire answers from KT project managers]

CONCLUSION

KT's case study looks at the problem faced by a company that uses traditional blueprint approach to a new type of project, a mix between economic and social infrastructure project. RDB's approach of focusing on sustainability has not been seen in many projects implemented by KT in the past which can be blamed in part of KT's ODA projects being mostly on infrastructure related projects. The stakeholder map shows movements of participants in three different scenarios; 'Blueprint', 'Idealistic process approach', 'Realistic process approach' which shows that using a process approach can help KT, in the case of the ICT training centre project in Rwanda, to tackle the project easier and more efficiently. Process approach can especially help in handing over the infrastructure and result of ODA projects to the beneficiary after project completion for its sustainability. The type of ODA projects and development projects that KT face is becoming more diverse and KT as a result has recognised the importance of development thinking when conducting such projects by employing development experts in its project management team in recent years. Kim (2011) in his paper 'Strengthening Korea's Evaluation of ODA projects' also points out that it is important to strengthen development education to ODA experts and consultants which this paper recommends to Korean companies engaged in Korea's ODA projects.

Possibility of adapting a 'process approach' to Korea's ODA projects has been the main idea of this paper. In 2010s, recent issues on 'Aid Effectiveness' will influence change in how Korea manages its current ODA policies and how it will affect the companies in how they manage their ODA projects. Literature review on the process approach shows some of the positive influences it can have on blueprint type projects and unlike other approaches it is flexible in its use as only those relevant to a typical project can be chosen and put to use. The research findings and the case study suggests that part of the process approach when applied can help in projects that have social elements included as seen in the Rwanda case study. It will add flexibility to the conventional blueprint projects run by KT and help it better deal with the complex environment that it will face in future ODA projects.

RECOMMENDATION

Edwards notes in his book 'Future Positive' (1999) that "Although international organisations and bilateral donor agencies speak of participation, partnership and the primacy of local ownership over decisions, in most cases the reality lags far behind." Reality can be very much different from what theories or policies may suggest. When such things are put in practice, adjustments will inevitably be needed. Policy and theories shape projects, and the results of many projects influence policy and theory. The two affect each other continuously.

In Korea ODA project level, adapting process approach can start small. Recognising that there is a limitation in the current blueprint approach in itself is part of the process approach. Projects will follow policies but policy change is slow. Using relevant parts of the process approach will help make current approaches more flexible and help Korean companies to undertake the project not as a business but more as a development project that may open new doors as seen in the stakeholder analysis in the case study. Different theories and ideas will continue to appear in the complex and dynamic world of ODA projects but applying the right ones for the right project is something that should be decided by all the participants.

NOTES

1. EDCF is Economic Development Cooperation Fund established in 1987, Korean government's ODA loan to developing countries where policy rests on the Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) and entrusted to the Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM) for administrative operation.

2. KOICA is Korea International Cooperation Agency established in 1991 that provides Korean government's grant aid to developing countries.

3. IDI is an index published by UN's International Telecommunication Union (ITU) based on internationally agreed ICT indicators. It is a tool for benchmarking the most important indicators for measuring the information society and also helps governments, operators, development agencies, researchers and others can use to measure the digital divide and compare ICT performance within and across countries (ITU 2012).

4. CSR is the concept that an enterprise is accountable for its impact on all relevant stakeholders. It is the continuing commitment by business to behave fairly and responsibly and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the work force and their families as well as of the local community and society at large (CEC 2003).

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