



RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AS A PRECURSOR OF SUSTAINABILITY OF DONOR-FUNDED PROJECTS IN THE HEALTH SECTOR IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study sought to determine the influence of resource mobilization on sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya

Methodology: This study adopted the positivism research philosophy and an explanatory research approach to identify the precursors of sustainability of donor-funded programs in Kenya's health sector. The unit of analysis for the study was eight (8) non-profit making health service provider entities in the health sector in Kenya. The unit of observation was 652 employees working in the health sector. A sample size of 248 which was 38% of the population was used.

Findings: The results indicated that 35.5% of variations in sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya can be attributed to changes in resource mobilization. Further, there was a positive significant relationship ($r = .596$) and goodness of fit of the model between resource mobilization and sustainability. There is a significant association between resource mobilization and sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya.

Recommendations: To prioritize sustainability in implementing all phases of the project management cycle, considering environmental and social impacts across all stages, from project startup to decommissioning and follow-on project operations.

Keywords: Resource Mobilization, precursor of sustainability, donor-funded projects

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Kenya Vision 2030 articulates sustainable systems by emphasizing affordable, quality healthcare and a productive population. The Universal Health Coverage under the Jubilee Government's Big-Four Agenda equally sought to have everyone access quality and affordable health services. The Constitution of Kenya strongly advocates the right to health for all within the devolved system of government. The Kenya Health Policy (2020-2030) aims to attain high health standards by offering the highest attainable standards by delivering equitable, quality, and affordable health services to all Kenyans. (MOH/GOK, 2012). The overall goal of the Kenya health sector plan - the National Health Strategic Plan II, 2018-2022 was to reverse the declining trend in health indicators (McCollum et al., 2019).

Kenya's has been, and still is, supported by a myriad of external donors to strengthen the health system and improve service delivery (Risso et al., 2014). According to the Global Health Database, external donor funding as a share of Kenya's current health expenditures has been on a declining trend, from 28% in 2006 to 18% in 2017 (WHO, 2021). Public health programs have been shown to deliver positive health outcomes, however, the maintenance of these programs over long periods and beyond the funding lifecycle has often been a challenge (Scheirer, et al., 2018). Sustainability in development projects is a dominant concern that affects decisions and actions that shape donor policies. Sustaining project outcomes beyond a donor-funded project's implementation period is a major development challenge in developing countries (Oino et al., 2015). Donor-funded projects either perform poorly or get into non-operational status upon termination of external support, facing challenges in sustaining their operations in the long term (Hassan & Forhad, 2018), attributed partly to people and process management (Ramirez. et al., 2013).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Donor aid is time-bound and so is a project's life. Donor funds facilitate delivery of planned outcomes. The donors then withdraw funding as the government or supported local entity is expected to develop the capacity to sustainably deliver the intended benefits (USAID, 2015). Sustaining outcomes beyond the funding lifecycle has often been a challenge (Ejughemre, 2013), with most project outcomes beginning to deteriorate soon after the external funding has terminated (WB, 2013). According to OECD (2015), health projects in public hospitals collapse one year after completion. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) reports that 63% of health projects fail shortly after implementation (KNBS, 2014). The project benefits have been lost soon after external funding has ended (USAID, 2015). A decline in financing from external sources requires either a corresponding increase from local sources or efficiency gains to reach the same goals with fewer, more streamlined resources.

Kenya Demographic Health Survey (2019/20) indicates that the progress towards the health-related SDGs has been slow. Transparency International (2011) established that there was an acute shortage of medicines and other essential supplies in most of the public hospitals in Kenya. Patients are forced to buy medicine and medical supplies from private chemists due to unavailability, often at inflated prices (TI, 2011). Although many stop-gap actions have been taken over time, the problem persists (USAID, 2015). Health facilities continue to experience a shortage of health products and technologies even after devolution. Kenya continues to rely heavily on donor support for procurement and supply chain management (Kihuba, English, Bozzani, Gheorghe & Griffiths, 2015).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of resource mobilization on sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H₀: Resource mobilization does not have a significant influence on sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The study was guided by the Resource-based view theory. The RBV originated from the ideas of Penrose (1959) who reviewed insights on an organization’s resource perspective. The RBV highlights internal value creation through use of organizational resources and capabilities; and their effect on an organization’s performance and its competitiveness in the market (Lockett & Wild, 2014). The RBV asserts that each organization has a set of unique resources which are critical in ensuring the firm not only survives, but also grows within the industry in which it operates. These resources range from technical, financial, physical, and human, which all contribute to the success of an organization. The resource-based view (RBV) argues that a firm's sustained competitive advantage is based on its resources that must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1995). The capability of firms to create or acquire these resources affects their performance and competitiveness. The acquisition, utilization, and accountability of the resources is important for the survival and sustainability of an organization. The strategic thinkers contend that institutions must embrace strategic resource mobilization to remain competitive.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this framework, the independent variable is resource mobilization and the dependent variable is project sustainability. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

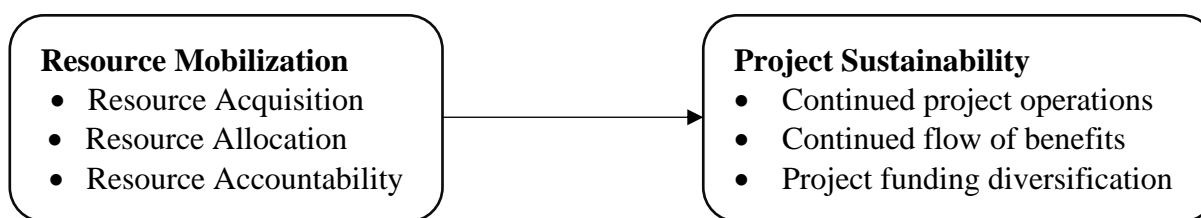


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

Resource Mobilization

Effective resource mobilization is essential for ensuring that projects are completed on time, within budget, and to the required quality standards. By carefully managing and optimizing resources throughout the project lifecycle, project managers can maximize project success and deliver value to stakeholders. Resources should be used in an accountable manner for sustainability to be attained. This involves effective and efficient allocation, utilization, and management of the various resources necessary for the successful execution of a project (Densford et al., 2018). After identifying the resources required to implement a project, a resource mobilization plan that outlines how resources will be allocated, scheduled, and managed throughout the project lifecycle is developed. This includes estimating resource needs, determining resource availability, and establishing resource constraints. Subsequently, resources are assigned to specific tasks and

activities based on project requirements, priorities, and constraints. This involves matching the skills, experience, and availability of personnel with the tasks they are best suited to perform, as well as ensuring that materials, equipment, and financial resources are allocated as needed.

In several incidences, information on how an organization mobilizes and manages its resources, particularly financial resource, highly determines whether a donor supports a health sector project or not (ROK, MOH, Annual Appropriation in Accounts, 2017/18). Funding mobilization involves securing new or additional funds or invoking strategies that maximize the efficiency of existing resources. Balancing resource demand and capacity serves to prevent resource overallocation or underutilization. Resource levelling therefore involves adjusting the project schedule to smooth out resource usage and avoid peaks and troughs in resource demand (Whaley & Gillis, 2018). Allocating resources into the correct use and efficiently utilizing and accounting for internal resources is important for sustainability. Collaborating stakeholders require accurate and up-to-date information on resource acquisition frameworks, resource accountability tools and resource reporting methods. This demonstrates the importance of accountability of resources in project management.

Optimizing resource utilization to maximize efficiency, productivity, and cost-effectiveness may involve identifying opportunities to streamline processes, improve workflows, eliminate waste, and leverage available resources more effectively. Contingency planning addresses resource shortages, delays, or other unforeseen events that may impact project execution. This involves identifying alternative sources of resources, reallocating resources as needed, and adjusting the project plan to mitigate the impact of resource constraints. For purposes of this study, resource mobilization was operationalized through the indicators of acquisition, allocation, and accountability.

Project Sustainability

The sustainability of donor-funded health projects encompasses various factors that contribute to the long-term effectiveness, impact, and continuity of health interventions. These constructs help ensure that projects can continue to deliver benefits to communities even after the initial funding period ends. Sustainability presents a lasting impact on project's beneficiaries and communities, leading to sustained improvements in health outcomes, behavior change, institutional capacity, and overall well-being beyond a primary project's duration. Conducting sustainability assessments periodically helps in tracking progress, addressing gaps, and enhancing the long-term impact and effectiveness of development interventions. The Commission of the European Communities (2013) submits sustainability as the possibility that a project will continue to deliver benefits when its external aid has expired. Mulwa et al. (2021) noted that project sustainability is concerned with maintaining a project's momentum until its predetermined health objectives are met. A development activity that tries to meet the requirements of the present, without sacrificing the capacity of the future to meet its needs, is said to be sustainable (World Bank, 2011).

Sustainability has various dimensions based on the target impact such as environmental, institutional, social, and economic impact. These dimensions are often interconnected and address the long-term impacts and viability of projects. Environmental impact focuses on preserving and protecting natural resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity for current and future generations. Social impact involves creating equitable, inclusive, and healthy communities where people can thrive. It involves promoting social justice, human rights, and addressing social inequalities such as access to healthcare and basic services. Continuation of project operations, benefits and outcomes has social impact in communities. Socially sustainable practices also emphasize

community engagement, cultural diversity, and promoting social cohesion and well-being. Economic sustainability focuses on fostering financial stability through generation of sufficient economic resources to cover project costs and provide long-term value to stakeholders. Ochelle (2012) submitted that health sector project sustainability is influenced differently depending on the funding source, which may be own institutional funds, or from governments, NGOs, or contributions from well-wishers.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Resource mobilization is promoted globally as a factor that has high likelihood to enhance project sustainability in all sectors. Studies concerning the influence of resource mobilization on the sustainability of water projects conducted recently in Kenya by Muniu et al. (2018) reveal that community participation in resource mobilization is important for the enhancement of sustainability of water projects. This was conducted in Machakos, where a sample of 150 respondents participated in the study. Different stakeholders, including the project team, beneficiaries, and sponsors, were involved. Qualitative data revealed that effective resource mobilization strategies lead to project success and sustainability. However, the views varied depending on the stakeholders. Projects that utilize domestically available resources have more likelihood for sustainability than those that do not, due to consistency in resource availability and mobilization (Dill, 2010).

Whaley & Gillis (2018), postulate resource mobilization as the process of acquiring resources from a provider and utilizing it to implement an organization's predetermined goals. This may be done through various mechanisms. Planning for sustainability through long-term financial planning horizons directly leads to project sustainability, if well executed. It deals in acquiring the needed resources in a timely, and cost-effective manner. Resource mobilization advocates for the acquisition of the right type of resource, at the right time, at the right price, and ensures the right and optimal use of acquired resources. It includes planning and acquisition, allocation and utilization, monitoring and control. Internal control strategies include accountability, transparency, and good governance in resource mobilization efforts (Finkler et al., 2020).

Further studies within the globe reveal the importance and determinants of resource utilization. A study in India (Ogutu & Mang'unyi, 2017) postulates that some of the key elements that strengthen resource mobilization efforts include having a clear sense and commitment to the organization's vision and mission, effective management, and leadership that ensures among others that there is accountability and transparency in the organization, solid reputation, credibility, and positive image, the ability to attract, create and sustain new resources while discharging services to their clients/ community.

A study conducted in medical institutions in Canada established that resource mobilization strategies are fundamentally dependent on the vision and mission statements, structure, governance, and policy of the organization (Cole, 2015). Regionally, in Tanzania, projects funded through internally generated resources partially or wholly after donor funding has ended were found to be more sustainable than those that rely on external funding (Dill, 2010). In Ghana, empirical evidence reveals that over-reliance on external donor funds has led to the inability of Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) to sustain themselves or their projects (Okorley, Deh & Owusu, 2017).

Bebbington, Unerman, and Dwyer (2014) established that to enhance accountability for project resources, the project data should be systematically collected, analyzed internally and

communicated transparently with key stakeholders. In some cases, organizations may take count of what is currently available and develop a plan to use those resources as efficiently as possible. Monitoring resource usage and performance is important in identifying opportunities for improvement and ensuring alignment with sustainability goals thereby positively influencing project sustainability.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the positivism research philosophy since the positivistic philosophy and models are grounded on the premise that human behaviour should be done in the same way as studies conducted for natural sciences (Blaxter et al., 2010). The explanatory research approach was used in the study since its goal was to identify the precursors of sustainability of donor-funded programs in Kenya's health sector. The unit of analysis for the study was eight (8) non-profit making health service provider entities in the health sector in Kenya. They comprise government entities at the national and county level, non-profit and faith-based organizations that collectively contribute to over 70% of health services and/or health products and technologies to the public and mission health facilities. The unit of observation was 652 employees working in the institutions with the understanding that they had a project management role and/or the knowledge to appropriately respond to the research questions and statements. Yamane's (1967) formula was used to calculate the sample size of 248 which was 38% of the population and thus adequate as suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2018). The study adopted stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques to ensure that the sample size was representative of the population.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study distributed a total of 248 questionnaires but only 210 questionnaires were duly filled and returned translating to a response rate of 84.7% which was considered excellent and suitable for further analysis and reporting.

Descriptive Statistics

The study used a 5- point Likert Scale where 1- strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4- agree and 5- strongly agree. Based on the response scale given by the respondents, frequencies, means, and standard deviations were computed and used to interpret the results.

Resource Mobilization

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements on resource mobilization. The findings as indicated in Table 1 show that 56.1% of the respondents agreed that there was a documented resource mobilization plan in their institution at ($M=3.844$, $SD=1.442$), while 52% agreed that there was proper planning and inventory of acquired resources at ($M=3.797$, $SD=1.561$). Further, the results showed that 46.5% agreed with the statement that their institution uses resources according to plan at ($M=3.691$, $SD=1.985$), while 56.7% agreed that their institution has a good framework for resource accountability at ($M=3.862$, $SD=1.572$). The results also showed that 38.5% of respondents were neutral on the claim that their institution ensures transparent resource reporting at ($M=3.501$, $SD= 1.042$), while 42.4% of respondents disagreed that stakeholders were involved in the full resource mobilization process at ($M=3.202$, $SD=1.552$). At ($M=3.920$, $SD=1.913$), 54.8% of respondents agreed that resource mobilization affects projects' sustainability. Most of the respondents agreed with the statements on resource mobilization.

The findings agree with those of other scholars. In a study in India, Ogutu et al. (2017) postulate that some of the key elements that strengthen resource mobilization efforts are having a clear sense

and commitment to the organization’s vision and mission, effective management and leadership that ensures that there is accountability and transparency in the organization, solid reputation, credibility and positive image, the ability to attract, create and sustain new resources while discharging services to their clients/community. Efficient resource mobilization influences project sustainability.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Resource Mobilization

Statements	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Mean	Std. Dev.
There was a documented resource mobilization plan in my institution	22.1	16.1	5.7	42.9	13.2	3.844	1.442
There is proper planning and inventory of acquired resources	20.8	21.3	5.9	28.9	23.1	3.797	1.561
My institution uses resources according to plan	16.5	16.2	20.8	20.4	26.1	3.691	1.985
My institution has a good framework for resource accountability	11.2	10.0	22.1	30.6	26.1	3.862	1.572
Stakeholders were involved in the full resource mobilization process	30.2	12.2	33.1	13.6	10.9	3.202	1.552
My institution ensures transparent reporting of resource utilization	13.7	15.7	38.5	18.9	13.2	3.501	1.042
Resource mobilization influences sustainability of projects	13.5	13.2	18.5	43.2	11.6	3.920	1.913

The question that served as the basis for qualitative data collection was, “How else does resource mobilization influence sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya?”. Adequacy of resources, according to respondents, was crucial for project implementation and sustainability. Having effective transitions from project plans to project execution and results reporting required integrating risk management measures into the initiatives which come at an additional cost to that of implementing the originally planned interventions. In response to the statement to suggest methods by which resource mobilization can be used to enhance project sustainability in the Kenyan health sector, respondents suggested resource forecasting in planning, establishing alliances based on mutual trust and accountability, and luring adequate and more predictable contributions as some of the keys to achieving sustainability within a project environment. According to respondents, accountability systems that are driven by openness, accessibility, and the capacity to close gaps are essential for guaranteeing sustainability.

Project Sustainability

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements on sustainability. Data in Table 2 indicates that 48.2% of respondents disagreed with the claim that benefits continued to be experienced even after the donor funding had ended (M=3.297, SD=1.249). Another 50.1% disagreed with the assertion that project beneficiaries continued experiencing the same outcomes even after the donor project had ended at (M=3.390, SD=1.521); and another 46% disagreed with the statement that their institution engaged in strategic partnerships to resource project operations after closeout (M=3.161, SD=1.429), 50.2% of respondents disagreed with the statement that they continued engaging with the project beneficiaries even after the project had ended at (M=3.461, SD=1.711), while 51.4% disagreed with the statement that their institution

expanded funding sources for project operations after closeout of donor-funded project at (M=3.517, SD=1.291). Findings further indicate that 39.7% agreed with the statement that the end-term project evaluation showed achievement of the project goals at (M=3.195, SD=1.267).

These findings are consistent with those of other scholars. Ahlawat & Singh (2019), Nguyen (2017), and Olele (2016) found in their study that sustainability of public projects has received criticism due to budgeting issues, poor feasibility, poor coordination, poor management skills, lack of flexibility and accountability, lack of stakeholder participation, political manipulations, lack of commercial viability and unresponsiveness. Varying propositions attribute stakeholders` interest to the project sustainability. For instance, Hugue (2020), suggests that stakeholder interests hinder project sustainability. In contrast, Hunjra et al. (2020) consider stakeholder`s interests as compatible contributors to project sustainability. This inconsistency complicates stakeholder integration decisions.

On how else sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya can be achieved after donors exit, the respondents suggested that there was a need for multisector stakeholder engagement in project identification so that projects would be selected to address real issues on the ground in a way that was beneficial to those the projects intended to benefit. More accountability was needed as well as project hosting institutions sourcing for alternative donors before exit. Some respondents mentioned there was a need for flexibility from the donors. The other concern was that there is an overall need for frameworks to ensure economic empowerment.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Project Sustainability

Statements	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Mean	Std. Dev.
Project benefits continued to be experienced even after the donor funding had ended	22.1	26.1	23.8	14.2	13.8	3.297	1.249
Project beneficiaries continued experiencing the same outcomes even after the donor project had ended	25.8	24.3	21.5	14.2	14.2	3.390	1.521
My institution engaged in strategic partnerships to resource project operations after closeout	23.6	22.4	20.2	15.4	18.4	3.161	1.429
We continued engaging with the project beneficiaries even after the project had ended	21.2	29.0	27.1	11.7	11.0	3.461	1.711
My institution expanded funding sources for project operations after closeout of donor funded project	20.2	12.1	28.0	23.8	15.9	3.517	1.291
End-term project evaluation showed achievement in the project goals	24.7	26.7	16.5	18.9	13.2	3.195	1.267

Linear Regression - Model Summary, ANOVA, and Hypotheses Testing

Linear regression was carried out to determine how each independent variable influenced the dependent variable. On a specific basis, linear regression sought to check the magnitude of the association between the variables. The level of significance of the relationship was checked using ANOVA test (T- tests) of the fitted models as well as the goodness of fit (F – tests) of the models (Cohen and Manion, 2016).

Resource Mobilization and Project Sustainability

Linear Regression

The hypothesis of the study, H_0 resource mobilization has no significant influence on sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya. To test this hypothesis, the study ran a regression between resource mobilization and sustainability. The findings as presented in Table 3, show the value of adjusted R^2 was 0.352 which implies that 35.2% of variations in sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya can be attributed to changes in resource mobilization. Other factors besides resource mobilization account for the remaining 64.8% of variability in sustainability. The results also demonstrate that resource mobilization and sustainability have a significant strong positive association, as demonstrated by the coefficient (R) value of 0.596. The change in R square was .003 indicating that the other factors related to Resource Mobilization that influence Project sustainability that have not been considered in this study only influence 0.3% and are insignificant in the regression model, this implies that our variable is a good fit for the study.

Table 3: Model Summary for Resource Mobilization and Project Sustainability

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.596 ^a	.355	.352	.46855

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Mobilization

Analysis of Variance

From the ANOVA findings, the p-value obtained is 0.00 which is less than 0.05, an indication that the model was significant. The findings also show that the f-statistic value (114.544) is greater than the F-critical value ($F_{1,208}=3.885$). Since the f-statistic value is greater than the f-critical value it can be deduced that there was a goodness of fit of the model for this study and therefore resource mobilization can predict the sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya.

Table 3: ANOVA for Resource Mobilization & Project Sustainability

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	24.147	1	25.147	114.544	.000 ^b
1 Residual	45.664	208	.220		
Total	70.810	209			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Sustainability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Mobilization

Beta Coefficients

From the equation below, when resource mobilization is held at a constant zero, sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya will be at a constant value of 1.943. The findings further revealed that a unit improvement in resource mobilization will lead to a 0.470-unit improvement in sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya. The findings reveal the t-statistic (10.703) is greater than the t-critical (± 1.97) and a p-value (0.00) which is less than the study’s level of significance (0.05). Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H_{02}), and accepts the alternative hypothesis (H_{A2}). The study therefore posits that resource mobilization significantly influences the sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya.

The study findings concur with those of Ogutu et al. (2017) who postulate that resource mobilization is positively correlated with project activity sustainability. Some of the key elements that strengthen resource mobilization efforts strategies include having a clear sense and

commitment to the organization’s vision and mission, effective management, and leadership that ensures among others that there is accountability and transparency in the organization, solid reputation, credibility, and positive image, the ability to attract, create and sustain new resources while discharging services to their clients/ community.

Table 4: Coefficients for Resource Mobilization & Project Sustainability

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.943	0.157		12.337	.000
Resource Mobilization	0.470	0.044	0.596	10.703	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Project Sustainability

From the coefficients table, the following model was fitted:

$$Y = 1.943 + 0.470 X_1 + \epsilon \dots\dots\dots (iii)$$

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study found an association between resource mobilization and sustainability of donor-funded projects in Kenya's health sector. The statistical results of coefficients showed that resource mobilization significantly influences the sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya. The study concludes that an improvement in resource mobilization will lead to an improvement in the sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY

Project-hosting organizations should develop a robust business case for sustainability, demonstrating the long-term economic, environmental, and social benefits of investing in sustainable practices. In so doing, it will promote and prioritize resource efficiency and cost-effectiveness through efficient project management practices to reduce overall project costs and implement proper internal controls to ensure donors resources are properly utilized and accounted for transparently. The study also recommends that policy-makers, the Republic of Kenya, donors, and other stakeholders develop, review, and revise policies and guidelines to align with the prevailing laws and regulations supporting sustainability in project management.

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