

The Project Management Methodology to assist ZIMRA¹

Tasiyana Siavhundu

Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) is a quasi-governmental organisation whose four-fold mandate is to collect revenue, facilitate trade and travel, advise the government on fiscal and economic matters as well as protecting the civil society. Like any other organisation in the private or public sector, Zimbabwe's revenue administrator can benefit substantially through embracing and fully implementing the project management methodology in its revenue administration and collection projects. The need to ensure synchronisation of projects and coordination of the implementation process resulted in ZIMRA establishing the Modernisation Projects Office (MPO) on 1 September 2011. ZIMRA's current five-year strategic plan (running from 2019 to 2023) talks of the organisation's adoption and application of international good practice project management principles to successfully implement its projects on time, within stated budget and scope.

Adopting a proper project management culture would undoubtedly assist the organisation in smoothly accomplishing its revenue generation endeavours especially at this point in time when the government is in dire need of funds to implement a plethora of national development projects meant to resuscitate dilapidated industries and restore the precarious economy to normalcy.

ZIMRA carries out a number of projects that inevitably require proper project management modalities and algorithms in their implementation. Such projects are found in various divisions of the organisation such as operations, ICT, finance and administration. Examples of projects that the organisation implement from time to time include ICT projects (e.g. installing software, servers etc.), construction projects (e.g. building staff dwellings, customs warehouses, office buildings etc.) as well as short to medium term revenue enhancement projects that are carried out by revenue officers on quarterly, semi-annual, annual or biennial basis.

Although the project management culture is not yet fully overt in the entire organisation, ZIMRA has been making frantic efforts to inculcate the culture. For instance, the organisation carried out an awareness campaign for the Prince2 project management methodology in 2015 so that all employees had an appreciation of the methodology and how it can enhance organisational strategy. The organisation also facilitated the World Customs Organisation (WCO)'s delivery of a training workshop on Customs Project Management 29 January to 2 February 2018 in the capital Harare.

This was based on the priorities of the revised WCO Mercator Implementation Plan for Zimbabwe, endorsed by ZIMRA in September 2017 and the aim of this training was to support ZIMRA in strengthening its training, human resources and project management capacities to respond to the provisions and challenges related to the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA). The training provided an opportunity for almost a score of officers to escalate their knowledge of best practices and modern techniques in specific areas of Customs

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Project Management with the ultimate aim to support ZIMRA's effective implementation of international trade facilitation standards. Most of the officers who undertook this training are in charge of managing reform and modernization projects linked to the Mercator Implementation Plan and are applying acquired project management skills.

ZIMRA's commitment to project management is evidenced in the current strategic plan which is anchored on the four Ps in which 'projects' is among the quartet. The four Ps are People, Processes, Partnerships and Projects. The organisation believes that a proper and efficient mix of people (talent management), processes (internal processes and operations) and partnerships (local and international partnerships with relevant stakeholders) can only be achieved under the auspices of well planned and executed projects.

About the Author



Tasiyana Siavhundu

Gweru, Zimbabwe



Tasiyana Siavhundu is a member of the Project Management Zimbabwe (PMZ) with qualifications and experience in Project Management, Economics, Taxation as well as Investments and Portfolio Management. He is a holder of a B.Sc. Honours Degree in Economics, Master of Commerce Degree in Economics, Post-Graduate Diploma in Project Management, Executive Certificate in Investments and Portfolio Management, Advanced Certificate in Taxation as and many other qualifications.

Tasiyana has worked both in the private and public sectors in Zimbabwe. He is now employed as a Revenue Officer with the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) where he has been instrumental in economic research, revenue enhancement projects, taxpayer education, audits and so forth. He is very passionate about research work and has interests in the fields of Economics (particularly Public Economics), Project Management and Taxation.

Tasiyana Siavhundu can be contacted by email address: tsiavhundu@gmail.com