A Systematic Stakeholders Management Approach for Protecting the Spirit of Cultural Heritage Sites

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Abstract: Most of cultural heritage sites are affected by and affect (positive/negative) their surrounding communities, local people and authorities, social and economical environment, supporters and sponsors, ICOMOS, etc; in other words they have a large number of stakeholders. So it is very important and vital to have a proper understanding of the needs, expectations and impacts of these various and sometimes conflicting stakeholders; which may briefly be called *stakeholders management*. Therefore for safeguarding the spirit of heritage sites, the site manager shall know his/her responsibilities regarding site's stakeholders, having proper and effective communication with them, and briefly has sound and proactive stakeholders management policy and plan. "Project Management Institute", USA, has developed a systematic method for managing stakeholders of projects and programs, which may be adopted to a high extent for cultural heritage sites; the subject that has been discussed in this paper.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals and organizations that are actively involved in the works, or whose interests may be affected as a result of works execution or completion. They may also exert influence over the objectives and outcomes. The management team must identify the stakeholders, determine their requirements and expectations, and as much as possible, manage their influence to ensure a successful work. Groups or individuals who are competing for limited resources or pursuing the goals which conflict with program goals, shall be considered, since they can affect the program (PMI 2006).

Stakeholders have different levels of responsibility and authority, and influence on a project which may change during the life of the

project. Their responsibility and authority range from occasional contributions in surveys and focus groups to full project sponsorship, which includes providing financial and political support. Stakeholders who ignore this responsibility can have a damaging impact on the project objectives. Also managers who ignore stakeholders can expect a damaging impact on project outcomes. Sometimes, stakeholder identification can be difficult. Failure to identify a key stakeholder can cause major problems for a project (PMI 2006).

Stakeholders may have a positive or negative influence on a project. Positive stakeholders are those who would normally benefit from a successful outcome from the project, while negative stakeholders are those who see negative outcomes from the project's success. For example, business leaders from a community that will benefit from a tourism program development may be positive stakeholders because they see economic benefit to the community from the project's success. Conversely, environmental groups or local community could be negative stakeholders if they view the project as doing harm to the environment or their culture. In the case of positive stakeholders, their interests are best served by helping the project succeed. The negative stakeholders' interest would be better served by impeding the project's progress by demanding more extensive environmental reviews. Negative stakeholders shall be often overlooked by the project team due to the risk of failing, to bring the project to a successful end.

Involving the stakeholders during initiation generally improves the probability of shared ownership, outcomes acceptance, and stakeholder satisfaction. *Such acceptance is critical to project success.*

Key stakeholders on a heritage site may include:
- Client, government authorities, final users
- Sponsors, internal and external owners and investors
- ICOMOS
- Environmental preservation organizations
- Researching institutes, universities, specialists
- Consultants, contractors, suppliers, workers
- Local people in the site and around the site
- Tourists and tourism agencies
- Site manager, performing organization, management team
- Public, people not directly related to the acquisition, but have influence, positively or negatively and society.

Naming and grouping of stakeholders aid to identify which individuals and organizations view themselves as stakeholders.

Program and Project Management

PMI (Project Management Institute, USA) has developed two standards as guidelines for managing programs and managing project. Under a MSc. dissertation, the PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge) guide was compared with traditional "heritage sites management" practice, and was concluded that project management approach is applicable for managing cultural heritage sites as a new approach, and the benefits were discussed (Hajialikhani 2006).

Organizations perform work to achieve a set of objectives. Generally work can be categorized as either projects or operations, Operations are ongoing and repetitive, while projects are temporary and unique (PMI, 2004). Projects often have intended and unintended social, economic and environmental impacts that far outlast the projects themselves.

PMI introduces programs as a group of related projects managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits and control not available from managing them individually. Programs may include elements of related work e.g. ongoing operations (PMI, 2006), See figure-1.
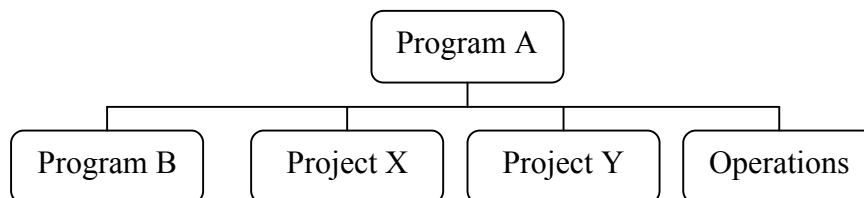

Figure 1- Program, Project and Operation relations

Program Management is the centralized coordinated management of a program to achieve the program's benefits and objectives, and applies three management themes (PMI, 2006):
- Benefit management: Definition and formalization of the expected benefits that the heritage conservation program is intended to deliver.
- Stakeholder management: defining program stakeholders – individuals/organizations whose interest may be affected by the program – positively and/or negatively.

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- Program governance: develop, communicate, implement, monitor and assure the policies, procedures and practices of the program to achieve the goals.

As it is seen, stakeholders management is one the main three themes of any program management.

Managing a project includes identifying requirements, establishing clear and achievable objectives, balancing the competing demands for quality and scope and time and cost, adapting the specifications and plans and approaches to the different concerns and expectations of the various stakeholders (PMI, 2004). The project management team has a professional responsibility to its stakeholders.

In order a project to be successful, the project team must (PMI, 2004):

- Select appropriate processes for management, required to meet the project objectives
- Use a defined approach to adapt the product specifications and plans to meet project and product requirements
- *Comply with requirements to meet stakeholder needs, wants and expectations* (managing stakeholders).
- Balance the competing demands of scope, time, cost, quality, resources, and risk to produce a quality product.

As it is seen, one of the four main steps of making a project successful, is having a proper plan for managing the stakeholders, which shows its importance.

PMI has developed a procedure for project management, known as *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide)*. The guide arranges a systematic procedure for management of any kind of projects (i.e. construction, IT, aerospace, etc.), with relevant methods, techniques and tools for a successful management. PMBOK and its construction extension introduce 13 areas of knowledge as shown in figure 2. Briefly these areas are:

- Integration Management: Coordinate various elements of project and the changes to satisfy stakeholders' requirements
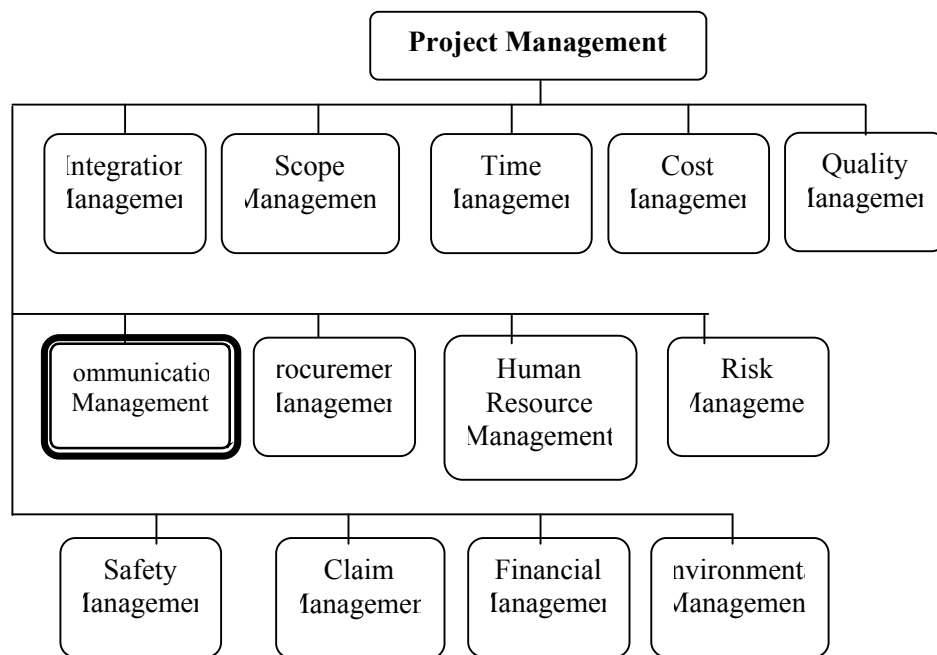
Figure 2- PMBOK Structure for project Management

- Scope Management: ascertain all and only the work required, to complete the project successfully
- Time Management: ascertain timely completion of the works
- Cost Management: plan, estimate, budget, and control costs, so that the works is completed within the budget
- Quality Management: determine quality policies, objectives, and responsibilities so that the project will satisfy the needs for which it was undertaken (e.g. ICOMOS charters)
- Human Resource Management: organize & manage project team
- Communication Management: Ascertain timely and appropriate generation, collection, dissemination, storage and ultimate disposition of information to different stakeholders. This area of knowledge
- Risk Management: planning identification, analysis, responses planning, monitoring and control of risks - uncertain events that, if it occurs, has a positive or negative effect on objectives
- Procurement Management: managing purchases or acquire products, services or results and also contract management.

- Safety Management: assure that the works are executed with appropriate care to prevent accidents, injury or damages.
- Environmental Management: ensure that the impact of the works to the surrounding environment remain within the legal permits.
- Financial Management: manage the financial resources, and more concerned with revenue sources
- Claim Management: eliminate or prevent claims from arising and for the expeditious handling of claims if they occur

Communication Management

It is the Knowledge to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, distribution, storage, retrieval, and ultimate disposition of project information and provide the critical links among people and information that are necessary for successful communications (PMI 2004). Managers can spend time to communicate the stakeholders. Everyone involved in the works should understand how communications affect the project as a whole. This management area consists of:
- Communications Planning – is a subsidiary plan of the project management plan determining the information and communications needs of the project stakeholders
- Information Distribution – making needed information available to project stakeholders in a timely manner
- Performance Reporting – collecting and distributing performance Information, such as status report, progress report, forecasting, ….
- Manage Stakeholders – managing communications to satisfy the requirements of and resolve issues with project stakeholders.

Communications management plan

As it may be seen from the above, stakeholders of a heritage site may vary widely in every aspects, from the level of education, to economical capability, influences, and type of reaction. So for every type of stakeholder, we shall define the best choices for the below items. For example if the level of education of the surrounding community of a site is low, the management shall have a communication method understandable for them. On the other hand, if they have any objection and are not considered, they may have violent reaction that may be quite different from the objection method of a

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scientific institution. For example for some stakeholders, face-to-face meetings are the most effective means for communicating and resolving issues, but for some face-to-face meetings may not be practical or not the best and easiest way, but telephone calls, electronic mail, be more useful. The communication management plan shall include:

- Stakeholders communication requirements
- Stakeholders needs and expectations
- Analysis of stakeholders needs and expectations
- Information to be communicated, and format
- Person responsible for communicating the information
- Person or groups who will receive the information
- Stakeholder influences
- Stakeholder risk tolerances against changes in the goals and planned activities
- Methods or technologies used to convey the information
- Frequency of the communication, how often that information will be distributed
- Guidelines for project status meetings, project team meetings, …
- Communications item, the information that will be distributed to stakeholders
- Purpose for the distribution of that information
- The time frame for the distribution of the information, and format and method of transmission
- Feedback from stakeholders, can be distributed and used to improve future works
- Stakeholder notifications about resolved issues, approved changes, and general project status shall be considered

Managing Stakeholders

Actively managing stakeholders decreases the likelihood of project failure due to unresolved stakeholders' issues, and shall enhance the ability of persons to operate synergistically, and limits disruptions.

- Managing Stakeholders shall be pro-active, which means the management team shall not wait the possible stakeholders to come up and object and then find out how manage them. But management shall try to find all potential stakeholders, study their requirements and expectations and include possible solutions in the management plan.

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• The site manager shall usually be responsible for stakeholder management.

• Studying Stakeholders requirements and expectations provide an understanding of stakeholders' goals, objectives, and level of communication during the project.

• As project issues arise, the site manager should address and resolve them with the appropriate project stakeholders.

• Stakeholders' roles and responsibilities can overlap, so the management shall have a proper understanding of the matter and have possible solutions.

• Project managers must manage stakeholder expectations, which can be difficult because stakeholders often have very different or conflicting objectives. For example conserving a site may be good for tourists and the economy of the community, but on the other hand have negative social-cultural effects on the community also that raise objection against the conservation. Or conservation and tourism may force the people in and around the heritage site to leave the place or change their way of living, *which briefly means not safeguarding the spirit of place.*

• While planning the project, the project team should involve all appropriate stakeholders, depending on their influence on the site conservation and its outcomes.

• The project team should use stakeholders in project planning since the stakeholders may have skills and knowledge or ideas that can be useful for developing the management plan.

• The project team must create an environment in which stakeholders can contribute appropriately.

• Stakeholders shall be notified of all changes and significant modifications as they occur.

• During the definition scope of works, all stakeholders shall be studied and consulted.

• Stakeholder analysis identifies and documents the influence and interests of the various stakeholders, also their needs, wants, and expectations; and selects and prioritizes their requirements. Some of these requirements are unquantifiable and subjective, such as satisfaction, which are subject to risk of not being successfully accomplished.

• Stakeholders' interests may be positively or negatively affected by execution or completion of the project and they may also exert influence over the project and its deliverables.

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• The project scope statement (Hajialikhani 2008) also provides a common understanding of the project scope among all project stakeholders and describes the project's major objectives
• Different stakeholders will measure project costs in different ways and at different times

Conclusion

Stakeholder of a heritage site from educated or uneducated people that may live in and around the site, to highly expert and educated institutions or society in general may have a large positive/negative influence on the conservation of the site, on the other words, the spirit of site, depending the plans and method of managing them. In fact it is the art of management to convert the possible negative influences to positive by proper understanding, studying, analyzing and planning for the various stakeholders. This shall be possible by a systematic and structured stakeholder management procedure.

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