CHAPTER 6

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF A PROJECT AFTER DONOR FUNDING HAS ENDED

6.1. Introduction

Donors invest large sums of money in projects as part of their social responsibility. It is therefore, essential that these funds are properly managed for their intended purpose and produce sustainable results.

This chapter converges on project management and its requirements for sustainability. The role of project manager is scrutinised, including the influence of the background, knowledge and qualification of the project manager has on the outcome of a project. The chapter also contains an investigation of the role of the project manager in ensuring sustainability after the project funding has ended.

6.2. Sustainability of Projects

Servaes, Polk, Shi, Reilly and Yakupitijage (2012) wrote an article on a case study that they conducted in two parts. They stated that sustainability can be used to measure the long term impacts of projects. Their conclusion was that, in order for a project to be sustainable, the project must include the community. Communication strategies need to be implemented to train the community members involved and to have follow-up procedures in place. This ensures that practices are implemented appropriately.

6.2.1. Features that must be present for a project to be sustainable (economic concepts in sustainability using the triple bottom line approach)

The sustainability of a project can be measured against the triple bottom line. All three of the elements of the triple bottom line need to be present for a project to be termed sustainable. Project managers must make certain that all three elements are present.

The King III Report on Corporate Governance requires triple bottom line reporting, stating that a company should report on economic, social and environmental issues. These three elements can also informally be called; profit, people and planet.

When looking at the planet element, in order for the project to be sustainable, the project manager should ensure that any economic development has considered environmental issues. When deliberating the people element, the project manager must ensure that the society benefits from the project in the long-term.

Lastly the profit element; profit is critical as it ensures sustainability, but a project's goal should not be all about reaping maximum benefits from the environment to make a profit. It should also work towards sustaining the environment in the long-term so that, by using efficient natural resources efficiently, the benefits reaped from the environment can last longer. These three elements are also referred to as the "pillars of sustainability."
(Woodfin, T. 2011)

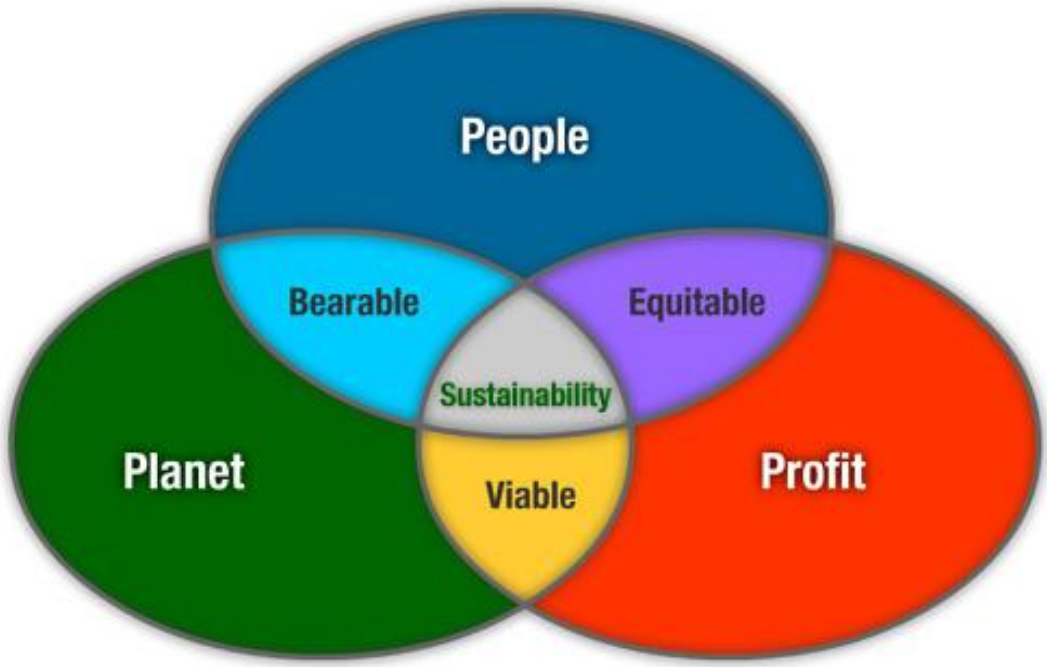

Figure 6.1: Triple bottom line

Source: Google Image, 2011

6.3. Project Managers

Project managers often have full responsibility for projects but aren't given the proper authority over resources, such as money or human resources, yet they are blamed if a project isn't successful (Jedd, 2006). Jedd (2006) also claimed that senior executives don't always recognise the vital role that project managers play. Traditionally project managers came from engineering backgrounds, which lead to executives excluding project managers from:

- the decision-making process
- strategic meetings
- the crucial early stages of project selection and definition
- contact with clients and customers.

According to Jedd (2006), for project managers to advance their project management, they need to include the following strategies:

- show results
- link the tactical delivery aspects to strategic business objectives
- don't just communicate
- speak the business language
- provide solutions to problems that keep senior executives up at night
- seek training
- develop strategic awareness.

Project managers therefore, need to broaden their education to include management, strategy development, marketing, finance, advanced leadership and negotiation, if they want to ensure their project sustainable.

Wills (2011) stated in his book "Essential Project management skills" that, project managers' need to be pro-active. He also states that project managers must be careful not to get so caught up in the project that they fail to remember were the project is heading. Wills also mentioned that the changing trends over the past decades have resulted in some daily challenges for project managers.

6.3.1. Investigation of a project manager

According to Muller, Geraldi and Turner (2012, 77-90), research over the last sixty years has brought some insight into the management of projects. But in spite of this research, most projects are still not successfully completed. The level of leadership that the project manager exercises in the project is often one of the factors that contribute to the unsuccessful completion of projects. Their study applied a framework for leadership competencies, that measures intellectual (IQ), managerial (MQ) and emotional (EQ) competencies, that were first developed by Dulewicz and Higgs (2012). Muller et al stated that both leadership and managerial qualities are necessary for the management of projects. They also reported that previous studies only looked at the technical aspects of a project, "missing the organizational and commercial dimensions". They referred to the iron triangle that can be summarised graphically as follows:

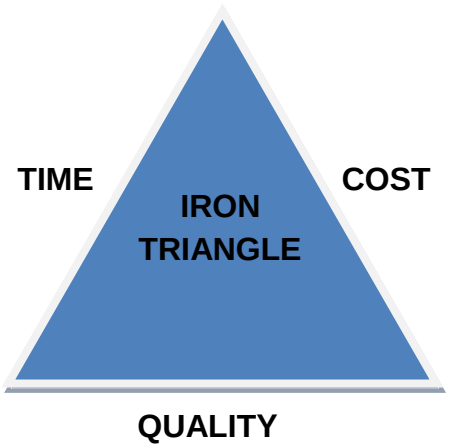

Figure 6.2: The Iron Triangle

Source: Own Research

Figure 6.2 refers to the aspects that are present in any project. With any project there is a time allocation in which the project needs to be completed, this would be the Time component of the Iron Triangle. A project would also state the cost allocated for finishing the project (in most cases, the outlined budget given by funders in their grant of memorandum), this would form the Cost (or resources) element of the Iron Triangle. Lastly the outcome or objective of a project can be classified as the Quality component of the Iron Triangle. For the funder two of these components are known, they know how

much monies is available and they know the time constraint of the project, but have yet to see the outcome the recipient of the funding needs to provide.

Muller et al referred to the iron triangle (time, cost & quality) when evaluating a project's success, and subsequently developed a model from the iron triangle.

Their model consists of the iron triangle plus nine other success criteria to access project managers' achievement of:

- end user satisfaction
- supplier satisfaction
- team satisfaction
- other stakeholders' satisfaction
- performance in terms of time, cost and quality
- meeting user requirements
- project achieves its purpose
- customer satisfaction
- recurring business
- projects' self-defined success criteria.

They also point out the difference between a project manager as a manager and project manager as a leader. According to them, a manager brings about, accomplishes, and is responsible for conduct. Leaders influence, guide direction, course, action and opinion.

These distinctions are crucial because managers are those who do the things right, while leaders are those who do the right things.
From their study they concluded that EM and MQ do have an effect on a projects success, while IQ does not contribute much to a projects success.

6.4. Chapter Summary

The success of a project is directly related to the level of management in the planning stage – whether the project is established and managed to ensure sustainability.

A project manager plays a critical role in ensuring the success of a project, as well as continuing a project after the initial funding towards the project has ended. The background, knowledge and qualification that a project manager has, plays a fundamental role in the sustainability and success of a project. The project manager is, however, not the only aspect that plays a role in the success of the project. Many other aspects such as finances, human resources, materials, the community, environment and endorsement of executive managers play a crucial role. These aspects require active management to ensure the ultimate success of a project.

Project managers need to be involved more in the strategic planning and decision-making processes to make certain that projects are sustainable.