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## **PROJECT PLANNING PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF AFRICAN EVANGELISTIC ENTERPRISE PROJECTS IN RWANDA (2011-2021)**

**BY**

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### **Abstract**

The study focused on the crucial role of effective planning in ensuring project performance within different institutions. Specifically examining AEE Projects in Rwanda, the research aimed to understand the correlation between project planning practices and project performance. It investigated the impact of project scheduling, financial planning, risk planning, and resource planning on project outcomes. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentary reviews from the staff of seven AEE projects, with a sample size of 118. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses, including correlation, regression, and variance analyses, were conducted using tools like Excel and SPSS. The results indicated a strong positive relationship between the independent variables (project scheduling, financial planning, risk planning, and resource planning) and the dependent variable (project performance). Notably, considering anticipated risks during project planning showed a high correlation of 0.945 with project performance. The study concluded with recommendations, including the involvement of experts in financial planning, engaging project stakeholders in risk planning, and conducting a skills gap assessment in project planning within organizations, followed by relevant capacity-building sessions.

**Keywords:** *Project planning, project performance, AEE Projects, Rwanda*

### **1. Introduction**

In today's globalized world, projects are instrumental in driving social and economic development, but poor planning remains a key factor contributing to project failures worldwide. Common issues include inaccurate requirements, disengaged sponsors, faulty cost estimates, shifting project objectives, subpar project management, and corruption during execution [29]. Effective project planning is essential for global project management, providing a foundation for mapping and organizing goals, tasks, schedules, and resources before implementation.

The primary goal of a project manager is to ensure timely delivery within the budget while meeting performance goals [23]. Success starts with meticulous planning, which is crucial for achieving project goals within set time frames, scopes, and budgets [19]. The Project Management Institute (PMI) defines a project as a temporary endeavor with specific goals to be achieved within predefined constraints [28]. In developing countries like those in Africa, government projects are crucial for socio-economic development, but failures often result from inadequate planning in various aspects [29].

Notable failures in Africa, such as the Chad – Cameroon Oil Pipeline and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, underscore the

importance of effective planning [12]. In East African Countries (EAC), despite impressive economic growth, megaproject failures persist due to poor decision-making, undefined scopes, leadership issues, material shortages, and payment delays [20]. Rwanda, aiming for middle-income and High-Income Country status, faces project failure risks due to insufficient planning, resource mismanagement, corruption, miscommunication, and poor project management [10], [25]

Efficient planning is crucial for development projects in EAC, as demonstrated by the challenges faced in Rwanda. The study examines the relationship between project planning practices and the performance of projects initiated by the African Evangelist Enterprise (AEE) in Rwanda between 2011 and 2021 [1]. AEE aims to evangelize Rwanda through church partnerships, and the study assesses the impact of project planning practices on AEE projects. In summary, poor planning is a recurring issue globally, notably in Africa and Rwanda. Effective project planning is vital for completing projects on time, within budget, and with the intended results. Addressing planning challenges significantly contributes to the success of development projects and socio-economic development [25].

## **2. Problem statement**

The importance of project planning in global project management cannot be overstated, as it involves mapping and organizing project objectives, tasks, schedules, and resources. Effective project planning impacts the entire project lifecycle, encompassing planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation. Unfortunately, poor planning significantly contributes to project failures globally, with a reported 70% failure rate attributed to inadequate planning [33].

In the African context, project failures are prevalent, with issues such as unclear objectives, poor project management, nepotism in appointing project managers, and inadequate planning identified as root causes [18]. The World Bank's 2018 report emphasizes inefficient planning as a leading cause of project failure in African development projects, a sentiment echoed by Zipporah's 2009 study, which cites the absence of well-defined project plans as the primary reason for project failures in Africa. In East African countries, particularly affecting local non-governmental and charitable organizations, the lack of adequate planning is a recurring issue. This problem often results in the misallocation of financial resources for personal gain and the involvement of inexperienced family members in project activities [10], [13], [32], [27]

Rwanda, despite its efforts to support development projects, has faced numerous instances of project failure attributed to inadequate contract management and inefficient planning. The Auditor General identified 22 failed projects worth Rwf 115.3 billion in 2020 alone, including the Lake Victoria Water Supply and Sanitation Programme and the Kirehe Community-Based Watershed Management Project. These failures were attributed to poor planning and contract management [26]. Studies conducted by researchers such as [24], and [31] highlight a correlation between proper project planning and successful project outcomes. Projects that undergo effective planning tend to achieve their objectives, while those with poor planning often fail either at the outset or in achieving anticipated results. Rwanda has witnessed underperforming projects with failures attributed to poor planning, inappropriate objectives and targets, coordination issues, resource mobilization challenges, and inadequate feasibility studies [34].

Despite previous research addressing project planning practices and their impact on performance, including works by [26], Antony [5], [14], [20], a comprehensive exploration of project scheduling, financial planning, risk planning, and resource planning has been lacking. This research gap prompted the present study to investigate how project planning practices specifically affect Agricultural Extension and Education (AEE) projects' performance in Rwanda [17] [21]

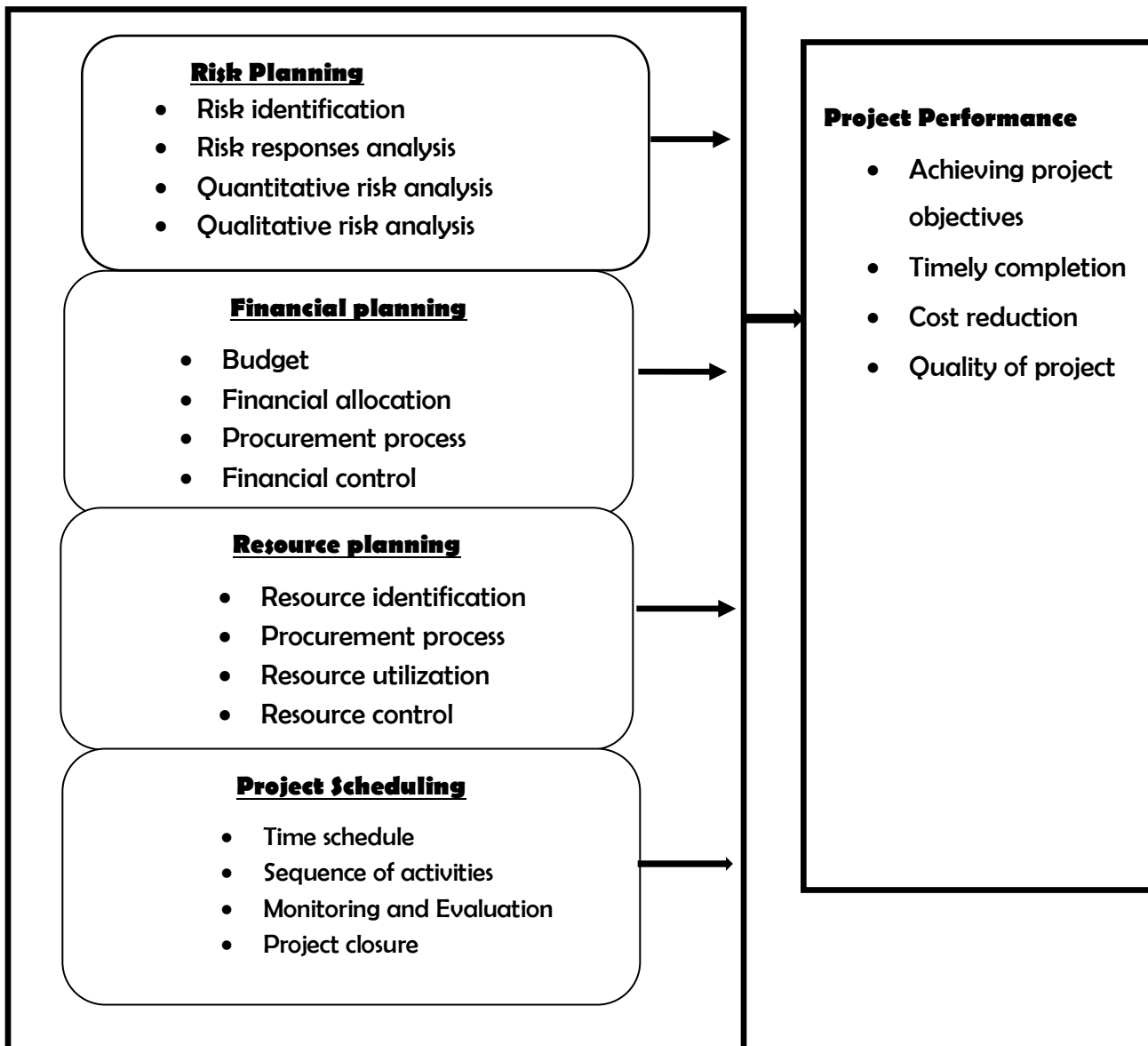
### 3. Conceptual framework

#### Independent variables

(Project planning practices)

#### Dependent variables

(Project performance)



#### 4. Specific Objectives

- [1] To analyze the effect of project scheduling on the performance of African Evangelistic Enterprise Projects in Rwanda.
- [2] To evaluate the effect of resource planning on the performance of African Evangelistic Enterprise Projects in Rwanda.
- [3] To assess the effect of financial planning on the performance of African Evangelistic Enterprise Projects in Rwanda.
- [4] To determine the effect of project risk planning on project performance of AEE Projects in Rwanda.

## **5. Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive research design to provide a detailed account of the relationship between planning practices and project performance in AEE projects in Rwanda, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The study population includes the staff of seven AEE projects in Rwanda. Stratified and purposive sampling methods were used to approach the right respondents, resulting in a total population of 129. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data is gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and documentary reviews, while secondary data is obtained from records, books, reports, journals, and theses. The collected data are cleaned by identifying and correcting errors, inconsistencies, missing values, and outliers. Qualitative data is coded, and quantitative data is prepared for analysis. Data analysis utilizes a Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for quantitative data and a content approach for qualitative data. Inferential statistics, such as correlation matrix and regression analysis, are used for generalizations. Excel was used for data entry and cleaning. Ethical principles were diligently followed, including seeking permission, obtaining informed consent from participants, and ensuring confidentiality. A formal request was made to AEE management for staff participation, and participants were provided with agreement letters to make informed decisions about their involvement.

## **6. Literature review**

### **Theoretical literature**

This part summarizes different literature related to the relationship between project planning practices and project performance. Furthermore, it reviews the literature about the research variables, which had been put forward by other authors. It emphasizes key terms and generalities that help to understand the nature and significance of the research.

### **Project planning practices**

Project planning is a crucial aspect of project management, encompassing four main stages: setting measurable objectives, identifying deliverables, scheduling, and planning tasks. Research by [2] highlights that inadequate project planning practices are a common cause of project failure, a sentiment echoed by [12], who emphasizes the role of poor project plans and inadequate risk management in such failures, [9] identifies various factors influencing project performance, including client satisfaction, business performance, efficient resource utilization, and future planning, [22] stresses that successful projects result from careful planning, precise execution, coordinated monitoring, and project control, with indicators of success being the accomplishment of goals and stakeholder satisfaction.

The impact of project planning practices on project success is crucial, as emphasized by [11], establishes that management and project planning practices significantly influence project success, incorporating aspects such as leadership, teamwork, management expertise, and client interactions. Inadequate project management and ineffective planning are the primary causes of project failure, according to Fatima and Alyaa [4] identify top management support, effective communication, clear project goals, and stakeholder involvement as crucial elements for project success in Ghana.

Effective project planning directly correlates with timely, accurate, and cost-effective project completion [6]. Thaddee [33] establishes a positive association between project planning and agricultural project performance, while [16] underscores the importance of effective project plans in ensuring accountability, progress monitoring, and feedback. Project management and leadership start with a clear definition of processes and roles, according to [1], [9] study in Finland introduces the theory of project execution, involving task selection and communication to workstations [2]

Fiona [15] underscores the importance of planning, monitoring, and evaluation in project management, providing continuous feedback and facilitating adjustments to project operation. Thaddee [33] highlights the role of project planning in performance improvement, problem detection, and correction, with monitoring and assessment essential for tracking progress and aligning projects with goals. Abdullahi [1] found that effective project planning positively influences project success in China. In summary, project planning practices are critical for achieving project success globally, involving goal setting, deliverable definition, task scheduling, and resource planning. Inadequate planning can lead to failure, while effective planning contributes to timely, cost-effective, and successful project completion, with leadership, teamwork, and management expertise being integral components.

## **Project performance**

Project performance is the realization of expected program objectives through the application of skills and strategies to meet program obligations. This achievement is facilitated by consistent planning and management procedures, allowing the project team to reach its goals. Performance measures and outcomes are assessed at various levels within donor organizations. There is a trend towards developing country program-level performance parameters and management systems. Successful project performance is attributed to positive achievements resulting from engaging in profitable work activities. Key factors for project success include careful planning, effective communication, attention to detail, risk management, and a strong project closure. A detailed plan is crucial for setting the project on the path to success, and stakeholders should be informed about the project's direction from the outset.

## **Theoretical review**

### **Theory of Change**

This methodology is used for planning, participation, adaptive management, and evaluation of initiatives. It involves defining long-term goals and identifying necessary preconditions, explaining the process of change through causal linkages, and specifying indicators to measure progress. Kurt Lewin's model is integrated with the theory of change, focusing on unfreezing, changing, and refreezing stages. This approach helps in clarifying results and addressing social phenomena in the planning phase [30]

## **Empirical review**

### **Influence of Project Scheduling on Project Performance**

Proper project scheduling is crucial for successful project outcomes. It involves allocating resources, defining task dependencies, managing risks, and ensuring timely completion. Effective project scheduling leads to optimized resource allocation, timely completion, risk mitigation, quality control, and improved project performance [10]

### **Influence of Resource Planning on Project Performance**

Resource allocation significantly impacts project performance. Allocating resources like human, financial, and physical resources in alignment with the organization's objectives is essential. Proper resource allocation improves organizational performance and competitive advantage. It ensures that tasks are assigned according to employees' skills and leads to higher productivity [35]

### **Influence of Risk Planning on Project Performance**

Effective risk management and planning are critical for project success. Risk management involves identifying, quantifying, and mitigating risks that may affect a company's strategic objectives. Early risk planning contributes to project implementation and performance by helping organizations manage uncertainties and make informed decisions to address potential threats and opportunities [22]

### **Influence of Financial Planning on Project Performance**

Financial planning plays a significant role in project success by ensuring efficient resource allocation, budget adherence, risk management, vendor and supplier relationships, cash flow management, financial accountability, and project sustainability. Well-structured financial management leads to optimized resource utilization and cost savings [20]

## **Research gap**

The research gap identified in this information pertains to the limited coverage of project planning practices and their relationship with project performance, specifically in the context of Alternative Energy Enterprises (AEE) projects in Rwanda. Previous studies have explored factors influencing project performance, but the information highlights that no research has comprehensively examined all aspects of project planning practices within AEE projects. The study addresses this gap by assessing key project planning practices, including project scheduling, financial planning, resource planning, and risk planning, across seven AEE projects in Rwanda. This research is seen as valuable, especially as Rwanda seeks to achieve middle-income status by 2035 and eventually transition to a high-income country by 2050. The findings of this study are expected to provide

valuable insights to project managers, donors, and implementing partners involved in various projects. These insights will help inform their understanding of the relationship between project planning practices and project performance, which has not been extensively explored in existing literature.

## 7. Data analysis and discussion

Concerning the specific objectives of this study, the following sections cover the findings per objective. The first section of this analysis discusses the extent to which project schedules influence project performance. The second part presents the findings on how risk planning influences project performance. The third part assesses the extent to which financial planning influences project performance and the last section looks at into how resource planning influences the performance of the project. For descriptive statistics, the findings were presented in the form of percentages, mean, standard deviation, and standard error mean. Standard deviation was calculated to support the calculation of standard error. Responses were analyzed using a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). Moreover, in the analysis, a standard error of less than 2 means that the mean is more accurate in reflection of the actual population and the results are considered reliable. For inferential statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, coefficients of determination, and analysis of variance were presented.

### Effect of risk planning on project performance

Generally, this study sought to examine the relationship between project planning practices and project performance of AEE projects in Rwanda. Specifically, the researcher aimed to analyze the effect of project scheduling on project performance, assess the effect of project financial planning on project performance, determine the effect of risk planning on project performance, and ascertain the effect of resource planning on project performance considering the project of AEE projects. Questionnaires were distributed among the targeted respondents and the guiding answers reflect this statement on what extent respondents strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Mean, standard deviation, and standard error mean were computed to analyze the findings and tables showing the responding view on these statements. Moreover, in the analysis, a standard error of less than 2 means the mean is more accurate in reflection of the actual population and the results are considered reliable

### Descriptive statistics on risk planning

Effective planning leads to project performance and considering its value in project management and attainment of project objectives through identifying early project strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and keeping that by planning for unknown future, it should be better to seek solutions to any challenge that might occur. Furthermore, to ensure creating a cornerstone of project success, it should be better to define how the project team will handle potential risk because achieving a project's goal depends on planning. Therefore, using the Likert scale, the researcher was interested in revealing to what extent AEE considers risk planning as a contributor to project performance. Risk identification, risk response analysis, quantitative risk analysis, and qualitative risk analysis were analyzed and the findings are presented in the following two consecutive tables

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on resource planning

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Effective resource mobilization affects project performance of AEE projects.	118	3.92	.025	.867
Resource identification affects project performance of AEE projects.	118	3.88	.030	.725
Effective resource control affects project performance of AEE projects.	118	3.75	.054	.712
Effective resource procurement process affects project performance	118	3.61	.083	.697
Valid N (listwise)	118			

Source: Field data, 2022

## Effects of project scheduling during the planning phase on project performance

A project is defined as a sequence of tasks that must be completed to attain a certain outcome. According to the Project Management Institute, the term project refers to “any temporary endeavor with a definite beginning and end. Under this study, the researcher assessed the role of project scheduling with project performance considering the role of monitoring d evaluation, time scheduling, and sequence of activities and determining project closure with project performance

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on project scheduling

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Monitoring and evaluation affect project performance of AEE projects.	118	3.87	.031	.535
Time scheduling affects the performance of AEE projects	118	3.78	.050	.541
Sequence of activities affects project performance of AEE projects.	118	3.54	.083	.602
Determine how project closure affects project performance of AEE projects.	118	3.44	.087	.548
Valid N (listwise)	118			

The study conducted on projects implemented by AEE in Rwanda revealed a significant connection between project scheduling and performance. Attributes such as monitoring and evaluation, time scheduling, sequence of activities, and determining project closure were analyzed. The mean values fell between 3 and 4, with standard errors less than 2. Respondents emphasized the importance of project scheduling but noted a gap in monitoring and evaluation, impacting project performance. Ineffective monitoring and evaluation were identified as factors affecting financial aspects, resource utilization, and overall project quality. The study underscores the need for systematic monitoring and evaluation during project execution, highlighting their role in performance improvement, learning, and innovation. The findings stress the necessity of clear and scheduled monitoring and evaluation procedures in project planning to avoid negative consequences on cost, effectiveness, quality, and overall impact. Recommendations include ensuring precise project scheduling, logical sequencing of activities, result-based monitoring and evaluation, and addressing potential risks during project planning.

### Indicators of project performance

The performance of any established project is one of the primary and desired results. For specific objectives, a study has identified indicators of project performance which are timely project objectives, timely completion, cost reduction, and quality of the project. The findings are illustrated in Table 3

Table 3: Indicators of project performance

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Cost reduction	118	3.57	.046	.497
Timely completion	118	3.84	.034	.369
Quality project	118	3.94	.022	.237
Achieving goals and objectives	118	3.96	.019	.202
Valid N (listwise)	118			

Source: Field data, 2023

The study conducted in Rwanda indicates positive ratings for cost reduction, with a mean score of 3.57, suggesting it is a good indicator of project performance according to AEE standards. Timely completion, investment in project quality, and achieving project goals also show strong relationships with project performance, as reflected in mean scores and standard deviations. The findings emphasize the crucial role of project managers in ensuring successful outcomes by meeting goals, adhering to

timelines, optimizing resources, and ensuring high-quality results. Effective project planning, including resource allocation, timeline structuring, financial planning, and risk management, is highlighted as essential for project success. Addressing risks during the planning phase is emphasized, along with prudent time allocation and budgeting for project activities

**Inferential analysis:**

**Correlation between dependent and independent variables:**

The researcher applied correlational analysis to measure the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. Independent variables were project scheduling, risk planning, financial planning, and resource planning and the dependent variable was project performance. Table 4 illustrates the finding

*Table 4: Correlation matrix*

		<b>Risk planning</b>	<b>Financial planning</b>	<b>Resource planning</b>	<b>Project scheduling</b>	<b>Project performance</b>
Risk planning	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	118				
Financial planning	Pearson Correlation	.200*	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030				
	N	118	118			
Resource planning	Pearson Correlation	.359**	.153	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.099			
	N	118	118	118		
Project scheduling	Pearson Correlation	.160	.141	.489**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.084	.127	.000		
	N	118	118	118	118	
Project performance	Pearson Correlation	.945**	.249**	.296**	.090	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.006	.001	.333	
	N	118	118	118	118	118

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. illustrates the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable, the results showed that there is a high positive relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. Taking into consideration anticipated risks during project planning has a 0.945 correlation with project performance and a p-value of 0.000. Financial planning has a 0.249 correlation with the performance of the projects and a p-value of 0.006. Resource planning has a 0.296 correction with the performance of projects implemented by AEE and a p-value of 0.001 and lastly, project scheduling has 0.333. The overall analysis implies that, for the performance of projects implemented by AEE, it is essential to consider risks, scheduling, resources, and financials during the planning phase of the project, but much emphasis should be on risk planning and little focus should be on project scheduling.

**Regression analysis:**

This section illustrates the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable. Under regression analysis was done using regression linear to find out the influence of the independent variable and dependent.

*Table 5: Model Summary*

<b>Model Summary</b>					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.950 <sup>a</sup>	.902	.898	.32449	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Project scheduling, financial planning, Risk planning, Resource planning

The results reveal that the Adjusted R Square statistic indicates a substantial contribution of 89.8%.



Table 6. Analysis of Variance

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	109.119	4	27.280	259.081	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	11.898	113	.105		
	Total	121.017	117			

a. Dependent Variable: Project performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Project scheduling, financial planning, Risk planning, Resource planning

Table 6 showed that the overall findings indicated that the overall model was statistically significant due to the P-value being less than 0.05. The findings indicated that effective risk planning, financial planning, resource planning, and project scheduling when these factors are effectively considered during project planning influence performance projects, and particularly contribute significantly to the performance of projects implemented by AEE in Rwanda.

### Regression coefficient

Table 7: Regression coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.117	.545		16.733	.000
	Risk planning	.396	.013	.949	29.654	.000
	Financial planning	.066	.028	.072	2.359	.020
	Resource planning	.009	.013	-.027	-.743	.459
	Project scheduling	.033	.019	-.059	-1.735	.086

a. Dependent Variable: Project performance

As per SPSS generated, the equation  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \epsilon$  becomes  $Y = 9.117 + 0.396x_1 + 0.066x_2 + 0.009x_3 + 0.033x_4 + 0.32449$  whereby  $x_1$  is risk planning,  $x_2$  is financial planning,  $x_3$  is resource planning and  $x_4$  is project scheduling. The findings showed that effective risk planning contributes up to 39.6% to the performance of projects implemented by AEE in Rwanda. Financial planning contributes up to 0.66% to the performance of projects implemented by AEE in Rwanda. Resource planning contributes up to 0.09% to the performance of projects implemented by AEE in Rwanda and project scheduling contributes up to 0.33% to the performance of projects implemented by AEE in Rwanda. Above all effective risk planning influence highly to the performance of AEE Project.

### 8. Conclusions

The study focused on assessing the impact of project planning practices on the performance of Alternative Energy and Environment (AEE) projects in Rwanda. The findings indicated that organizations prioritizing risk recognition during project planning experienced better project success. Financial resource planning, including budgeting, resource allocation, and procurement practices, was found to have a positive and significant effect on project performance. The study suggested that organizations involved in AEE projects in Rwanda should pay attention to these aspects to enhance outcomes. Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of addressing skill gaps in resource mobilization through capacity building. It emphasized key elements during project planning, such as clear scheduling, accounting for project completion time, logical activity order, result-oriented monitoring, coherent project closure strategy, and recognition of potential risks, to improve project performance.

### 9. Recommendation

The overall study ended with the following recommendations: There is a need to engage experts or experienced personnel during financial planning to avoid over-estimation or under-estimation. Organizations are recommended to engage project stakeholders during risk planning to ensure that all are captured. There is a need to assess the project planning skills gap

assessment in an organization and prepare capacity-building sessions accordingly. Project evaluators should always consider planning documents with outcomes by considering financials, resources, risks, and scheduling. For mitigation strategies, organizations are recommended to develop proactive mitigation strategies for high-priority risks. Formulate actionable plans to reduce the impact or likelihood of identified risks. These strategies should be well-documented and readily accessible to the project team. Continuously monitor the identified risks throughout the project lifecycle. Regularly assess the effectiveness of mitigation strategies and update them as necessary based on changing circumstances. Consider resource availability and workload when assigning tasks. Avoid overloading team members, and be prepared to adjust assignments if unexpected changes occur. Efficiently managing resource schedules and timelines can prevent bottlenecks and resource shortages. Use tools like Gantt charts to visualize and manage resource allocations over time.

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