

Original Paper

Consultants' Performance on District Assemblies' Common Fund Projects

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Abstract

This study sought to examine the performance of District Assemblies' consultants on Common Fund projects in Ghana. The study employed cross-sectional design and quantitative research approach using a structured questionnaire based on a list of roles of building consultants developed by the Hong Kong Housing Authority to collect the primary data for analysis. The questionnaire was administered by postal survey to 80 District Assemblies (DAs) in Ghana. A system of weights and rating were used to assess the importance of each role and how well the consultants had performed in the same roles. The results showed that under project-related roles, the DA consultants performed very well in quality of recommendations, presentation of reports, design solutions and quality of tender documents, and under general roles they performed very well in effectiveness in surmounting problems, relationship with clients and responsiveness. Major roles requiring improvement include final drawings, presentation of drawings and collection of information during the design phase. The overall performance of the consultants in project-related and general roles was each 62% of maximum score. This indicates that more room exists for continual improvement in performance on project-related and general roles. The findings point to the need for regular performance evaluation of consultants of DAs in order to ensure delivery of quality service and value for money. It is also important to regularly train and educate District Assembly officials involved in recruitment of consultants on why evaluation of consultants is so vital in drawing up contracts. The findings are of value to local government entities seeking to obtain greater satisfaction from their consultants, and also to consultants wishing to improve quality of their service and deliver on their roles. District Assemblies, Consultants, Performance, Common Fund Projects.

Keywords

performance, district assemblies, consultants, common fund projects

1. Introduction

The government of Ghana has since independence been responsible for the development of the country, and spends a greater portion of the nation's resources on infrastructural development. Until recently, all public projects in Ghana were financed by central government from annual budgetary allocations and donor supports. Out of a total population of about 24 million, over two-thirds live in rural areas (Osei Assibey, 2005). For effective administration and development of these areas, there was the need to decentralise governance so that local people could be involved in governance and evolve activities and programmes that met their needs and aspirations (Osei Asibey, 2005). To achieve this, decentralised governance was successfully implemented in 1988 in Ghana, and the Local Government Act, 1993 (ACT 462) established the District Assemblies (DAs) in the Fourth Republic of Ghana (Botchway, 2000). The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana provides in Article 242 that a DA shall consist of one person elected from each local government electoral area within the district, the member or members of parliament for the constituencies that fall within the area of authority of the DA, the District Chief Executive of the District and other members not more than thirty percent of all the members of the DA appointed by the President. Section 162 of Act 462, defines "District Assemblies" to include Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies whiles "District Chief Executives" includes Metropolitan and Municipal Chief Executives. District Assemblies are composed of at least 11 decentralised departments which include Works Department, Education, Youth and Sports Department, Social Welfare and Community Development Department, Physical Planning Department, Finance Department, Natural Resource Conservation Department, Central Administration, Trade and Industry, Disaster Prevention Department, Health Department and Department of Agriculture (Osei-Asibey, 2005). The DA is the highest political and administrative body in the district with legislative and executive functions. Section 10 of Act 462 (1993) lists functions of the DAs to include 1) initiating of programmes for the development of basic infrastructure and providing municipal works and service in the district, 2) promoting and encouraging other persons or bodies to undertake projects under approved development plans and 3) monitoring the execution of projects under approved development plans and assessing and evaluating their impact on the people's development in the local, district and national economy.

In line with the DA's mandate of developing its area, projects are identified or proposed by the DA, local communities or government. Projects are either executed by the Works Department of the DAs or by agents of the DAs (contractors and consultants) depending on the size, cost, duration of the project, manpower and skill required (Botchway, 2000). The District Assemblies' Common Fund (DACF) was created by Section 252 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the DACF Act (ACT 455) was enacted in 1993 to allocate not less than 5% of the total revenue of the nation to the DAs for development (Osei-Asibey, 2005). This was to ensure a balanced and equitable distribution of national development. The DACF is the most important source of funding for DAs and covers between 80 - 90% of a DA's annual expenditure (Banful, 2009). Currently, the percentage of the total government revenue allocated

to the DAs is 7.5%. While there are broad regulatory guidelines, DAs are free to use the funds as they wish if the intended use is in their budgets furnished to the DACF Administrator prior to disbursements (Banful, 2009). The DACF has provided finance for development in health and sanitation, education, potable water, residential and office accommodation, rehabilitation of roads and provision of community centre facilities (Osei-Asibey, 2005). The Fund, according to a World Bank Report (2004) on the DACF, has become a suitable mechanism for providing resources to the Districts for the provision of basic infrastructure in education, health and water which hitherto have been neglected. However, erratic payments by government and large number of competing needs have put a lot of pressure on the DACF. Additionally, due to the near absence of technically competent and experienced staff in the districts, utilisation and management of DACF projects have been beset with problems (Osei-Asibey, 2005). The DAs lack the capacity to solely supervise their development projects, and therefore rely heavily on external consultants particularly for Common Fund projects. The quality of service delivered by these external consultants has seldom been thoroughly evaluated by the DAs. Some DAs underestimate the impact of substandard consultancy service on the success of construction projects. Many delays, cost overruns, reworks, variations, claims and disputes can be traced back to erroneous designs, poor contract administration and lax supervision of the consultant (Chini & Valdez, 2003). This underscores the need to regularly evaluate the performance of consultants on DACF projects to guarantee value for the huge financial resources invested in the public projects. Regular evaluation will ensure that DA consultants deliver on their roles and improve on the quality of their service. The objective of this study therefore was to evaluate the performance of consultants on DACF projects in Ghana, to ensure that they deliver quality and efficient service.

2. Consultants and Consultancy Services

The Public Procurement Act of Ghana, 2003 (Act 663) defines “consultancy services ” as services which are of an intellectual and advisory nature provided by firms or individuals using their professional skills to study, design and organise specific projects, advise clients, conduct training or transfer knowledge. Act 663 provides that a “consultant” means a person, natural or corporate, dealing in the provision of consultancy services. Consultants have been in the construction sector for a long time. The technical and contractual intricacies of today's infrastructure and construction projects and regulations of some nations necessitate the appointment of project consultants to preserve the rights and interests of the client (Chow & Ng, 2007), hence the increasing trend of use of consultants to supervise projects on behalf of clients. Consultants are key stakeholders whose actions and inactions have appreciable impacts on projects in the industry, and are accountable for the technical risks in a conventional project (Havemann, 2007). They are responsible for developing the requirements of project clients, setting targets, deadlines and establishing standards for meeting these requirements, preparing project documents that describe the targets etc. While the accuracy and relevance of the consultant’s design and recommendations could have profound impacts on the subsequent work quality

and claims, evidences reveal that lax control during the construction stage could also lead to dissatisfaction and project failure (Kasma, 1987). It suffices to say that a project cannot be successfully executed without the services of consultants. Consultants serve to uphold the interests of their client and prospective users throughout the whole project cycle (Chow & Ng, 2007). If an appropriate consultant is selected, chances of delivering a project on time and within budget increases (Federation Internationale Des Ingenieurs Conseils, FIDIC, 1997). In the construction sector, different types of professionals provide advisory services to help achieve the clients' goal. These professionals, depending on the procurement process adopted by the client for the project execution, may be employed directly by the client in his organisation or as external consultants, depending on the size and complexity of the project, the clients' organisation and the national policy regulation (Chow & Ng, 2007). For a typical construction process, the services of Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Structural Engineers, Services Engineers, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers may be required.

3. Performance Evaluation

The need to improve performance of the construction industry has brought to the fore the issue of performance assessment in many countries (Beatham *et al.*, 2004; Ofori, 2000). Undesirable project performance are identified in various forms as low productivity, delays, cost overrun, poor quality etc. (Le-Hoai *et al.*, 2008; Mutijwaa & Rwelamila, 2007; Makulwasawatudom *et al.*, 2003). Discontent with the state of their construction industries, governments in developed countries have supported various initiatives including the use of performance measures to assess project performance (Ofori, 2001; Ofori, 2000), which has led to the modelling of indicators and criteria in which performance could be measured (Shenhar *et al.*, 2002; Atkinson, 1999). The UK construction industry in particular has resorted to using several performance measures to address improvement concerns of the various aspect of the industry (Beatham *et al.*, 2004). In developing countries, however, little evidence exists to show that concerted efforts are being made in this regard, despite acknowledgement by several countries of the existence of project performance inefficiencies (World Bank, 1994). It is in the light of this that the World Bank (1994) advised that it was time developing countries did things differently, to reverse the inefficiencies within their construction industries. To safeguard the interest of clients and promote efficiency within the industry, performance evaluations are implemented to ensure that projects meet clients' expectations in terms of cost, time, quality etc. The subject of performance evaluation is now encountering increasing interest in both the academic and managerial circles, due to the broadening spectrum of performances required by the present-day competitive environment and the new production paradigm (Dixon *et al.*, 1990). The main driver behind this thinking is the need to optimise an organisation's performance both internally and externally within its respective marketplace. The term 'performance' has different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Traditionally, it is used to measure effectiveness (doing the right thing) and efficiency (doing the right thing right) of actions (Bourne & Neely, 2003). It is thus a systematic way of evaluating the inputs and

outputs in manufacturing operations or construction activity and acts as a tool for continuous improvements (Takim & Akintoye, 2002). Performance indicators state the measurable evidence necessary to prove that a planned effort has achieved the desired result (Takim & Akintoye, 2002). In other words, when indicators are measured with some degree of precision and without ambiguity, they are called measures. However, when a precise measurement cannot be obtained, it is usually referred to as performance indicators. Performance measures are numerical or quantitative indicators (Eboli & Mazzallu, 2012). The process of performance measurement is usually determined by the metrics of a number of indicators, which include financial and non-financial indicators (Yeung *et al.*, 2010). An effective performance management system will greatly depend on the performance indicators used to define the performance of the organization from a number of perspectives. It is therefore very important to design those indicators so that they relate directly to the various perspectives that an organization decides to adopt (Samson & Lema, 2002). In recent years, the most important performance indicators include client satisfaction, business performance, health, safety, environment, etc. (Yu *et al.*, 2007). Construction Users' Round Table, CURT, (2005) summarised the importance of performance evaluation as "what gets measured gets improved". Neely (1999) identified seven reasons why performance management has now become so important. These are the changing nature of work, increasing competition, specific improvement initiatives, national and international awards, changing organisational roles, changing external demands and the power of Information Technology.

3.1 Frameworks for Evaluating Performance of Consultants

The importance of consultants' evaluation has given rise to several research studies which focused on the process of consultant selection (Avila, 1995), the use of task and contextual performance criteria for evaluating design and build consultants (Ling *et al.*, 2000), the establishment of multi-attribute models for selecting design and build (Ling, 2002), and architectural consultants (Cheung *et al.*, 2002). Ng and Chow (2004) identified technical capabilities, managerial capabilities, financial capabilities, and quality assurance and control as important in consultants' selection. FIDIC (1997), World Bank (1997), and clients in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Hong Kong have developed their own consultant evaluation frameworks to improve the transparency of evaluation. Ng (2005) and FIDIC (2001)'s criteria are based on the roles of a consultant on any engineering project, and may be more appropriate than that of the Colorado Department which was designed for the special needs of a Transportation Department. Ng's (2005) framework for evaluating consultants is based on the specific roles of the consultant during the different phases of a project namely the planning, design, tender, construction and post construction phases, and the general role of consultants. The framework identified 28 different evaluating criteria from all the distinct phases of project lifecycle. FIDIC's framework focuses on three major criteria namely the technical, managerial and general output criteria for evaluation. Though very important, FIDIC's broad areas do not show the roles of the consultant in each phase of the project but rather a broad generalisation. Performance in some phases of a project life is more critical than others but it is important that performance is known for all phases. Ng's (2005)

framework and criteria cover a wider range of roles of the consultant than FIDIC's (2001) evaluating criteria. It gives the evaluator the opportunity to first rank the criteria in order of importance from their perspective before using the ranking in the evaluation. The FIDIC framework assumes equal importance for all the criteria and does not give clients the opportunity to rank the criteria in order of importance. The FIDIC (2001) criteria provides for evaluation on a three-point scale of exceptional, satisfactory and unsatisfactory while Ng's framework allows for clients to evaluate on a five-point scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the least performance and 5 the best possible performance. This gives evaluators a wider opportunity to express their views. Ng's (2005) framework gives the client the opportunity to evaluate the consultant singlehandedly as is the case in this study. Furthermore, the project-based roles listed by Ng (2005) are relevant to building consultants and clients in Ghana. It is on this basis that Ng's (2005) framework was adopted for this study.

4. Research Methodology

This study employed cross-sectional design and adopted quantitative research approach to primary data collection. The primary data collection instrument involved a structured questionnaire survey of DAs in

Ghana. The sample size was determined from the formula $n = \frac{n'}{(1 + \frac{n'}{N})}$ (Kish, 1965), where n = sample

size, $n' = \frac{S^2}{V^2}$, N = Population size, S = Maximum standard deviation in the population element (total

error = 0.1 at a confidence level of 95%), V = Standard error of sampling distribution = 0.05 and P = the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population (0.5). A sample size of 80 DAs from the total population of 170 DAs (existing at the time of the study) (www.ghanaweb.com) was used for the study, after adjustment to compensate for non-response. In order to consider the views of DAs in all the ten regions of Ghana, regions of Ghana were considered as strata from which DAs were selected using proportionate sampling (Table 1). This resulted in 13 DAs in Ashanti region, 8 in Volta, 5 in Greater Accra, 10 in Eastern, 4 in Upper West, 4 in Upper East, 8 in Central, 11 in Brong Ahafo, 9 in Northern and 8 in Western region. Within each region, the sample units were randomly selected to answer the questionnaire. The above samples were used for the study on the assumption that there exists a link between the characteristic of the samples and the population, allowing a series of referrals to be made within a circle of acquaintances (Berg, 1988). The questionnaire for the study consisted of two sections and involved closed-ended questions. The first section of the questionnaires involved the profile of the DAs. The second section assessed the overall quality performance of the DAs consultants. Respondents to the questionnaire were DAs Engineers and Works Superintendents in the Works Department of the DAs. These officials in the Works Department are not expected to work as consultants for DACF projects in Ghana, and are therefore considered as appropriate respondents to the questionnaire. In Ghana, public organisations like the DAs are expected to select their consultants according to the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, Act 663 (2003). The criteria used in this

section are based on the evaluation framework adopted by Ng (2005). In order to reconfirm which evaluation criteria are more important to the DAs, respondents were asked to rank in order of importance to them the roles of consultants during the different project phases on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 = least important and 4 = most important (Ng, 2005), and also rank for the same factors how well they perceived their consultants to have performed in the same roles for DACF projects on a five-point Likert scale (1 = poor; 5 = good). Projects funded through the DACF were chosen as the basis of the study because they provided a common platform with similar characteristic for all DAs. Forty-three (43) responsive questionnaires out of 80 were received, resulting in a response rate of 54%. The first part of the questionnaire on the profile of the DAs was analysed using percentages, and the second part was analysed using relative importance and a combination of mean weights derived from the raw scores (Ng, 2005). To reconfirm whether the weightings used for computing the overall performance of DAs consultants was acceptable to the DAs, the mean weighting for each evaluation criterion was first established. To convert the mean scores into a weighting scale of 1-4 required the computation of the incremental scale. An incremental scale was developed with the highest and lowest mean scores. The highest and lowest mean importance was 3.58 and 2.58 respectively, showing a difference of 1.0. This was divided into four, giving an incremental range of 0.25. Thus any mean score from 3.58 to 3.33 was assigned a weight of 4; from 3.32 to 3.08 was assigned a weight of 3; from 3.07 to 2.83 was assigned a weight of 2 and from 2.82 to 2.58 was assigned a weight of 1. The performance score of each criterion was calculated by multiplying the weight by the mean rating, and the overall performance score was simply the summation of all the weighted scores.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Profile of Respondent DAs

The study showed that 26% of DAs involved in the study have existed for less than 5 years, and 74% have existed for over five years. Thus, majority of the respondents have dealt with consultants for over five years, a period long enough to give reliable information about the performance of consultants. The study further showed that 53% and 47% of the questionnaires were completed by District Works Engineers and Works Superintendents respectively. These are officials in the Districts directly involved in construction works and by extension those who deal directly with consultants at the District level and have the requisite knowledge to address issues raised in the questionnaire. They are also considered to be in good positions to provide reliable and accurate information on external consultants' performance. Eighty-six percent (86%) of the respondents have over five years working experience in construction management at the District level. They are therefore very likely to have the knowledge, skills and judgement to understand and address the issues raised in the questionnaire and be able to differentiate between expected and actual benefits from the DAs project consultants since skills and competencies are expected to improve with continuous practice (Hammer & Champy, 1993).

Majority of DAs are of the view that consultants are employed mainly because DAs do not have the

required expertise for supervision of projects. Other significant reasons are heavy work load and the high value of certain projects. Indeed, this is significant because some of the DAs did not actually have the capacity to carry out supervision of all construction works within their Districts which span over large geographical areas. The above results confirm findings of Osei-Asibey (2005) that due to the near absence of technically competent and experienced staff in the districts, utilisation and management of DACF projects have been beset with problems.

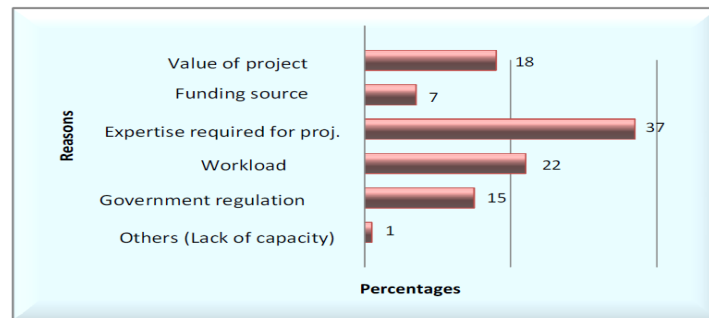


Figure 1. Reasons for Using Consultants

The results again revealed that only 20% of the DAs included the evaluation of the work of consultants during and after execution of DACF projects in their contract. Thus for a vast majority, there was no evaluation of consultants in their contracts, and therefore no likelihood of any formal evaluations. This situation may account for the many delays, cost overruns, reworks, variations, claims and disputes traced back to erroneous designs and poor contract administration (Chini & Valdez, 2003). Seventy percent (70%) of the DAs did not evaluate the performance of their consultants. This is consistent with the result which showed that most DAs did not include evaluation of performance of their consultants in their contracts. Indeed, it was surprising that DAs who did an evaluation of the consultants on projects (i.e., 30%) were more than those who actually included it in their contract with the consultants. The reason for this may be that informal evaluation may be done by officials on any contract and this may account for the result. District Assemblies may not be formally evaluating performance of consultants because they have other opportunities to evaluate consultants during their selection for other projects. The lack of performance evaluation at the DAs, may account for the many delays, cost overruns, reworks, variations, claims and disputes characterizing the management of DACF projects in Ghana (CURT, 2005; Osei-Asibey, 2005; Chini & Valdez, 2003). It was also revealed that 81% of DA respondents do not include detailed roles of consultants in their contract with them. This may be because DAs perceive consultants to be experts hence their laxity in expressly stating their roles. In addition, since they have the right certification for their profession, the DAs may not want to repeat their specific roles in details, hence the large number of respondents declining to state detail roles of consultants.

5.2 Performance Evaluation of Consultants

This part reports on the DAs rating of consultants' roles and consolidates their raw scores to obtain a score for their performance.

5.2.1 Importance of Roles of Consultants

Table 1 shows the mean importance of each role or criterion and their relative weights developed from the lowest and highest mean importance.

In evaluating the roles of DA consultants, respondents rated the following roles as very important: *design solution, presentation of drawings, quality of tender documents, tender evaluation, supervision of contractors and quality of end product, final measurement and final account*. In Ghana, many stakeholders like the DAs consider drawings, tender documents and evaluation, supervision and the quality of end product to be most important. To the DAs, *collection and appreciation of background information, methodology and analysis, management of sub-consultants and cost estimates during design phase* are the least important roles of consultants. Although these roles do not directly impact, to a large extent on the client's day to day activities, they are background roles of the consultant required for good performance. The *collection and appreciation of background information* which was surprisingly weighted as not important by the respondent suggests that DAs do not consider their input in the initial designs of projects as important. *Cost estimates during the design phase* which was weighted as not important is at variance with industry practice worldwide. This view might account for the recurrent inability of DAs to execute projects within budget and time. Thus, DAs may have accepted the constant phenomena of cost and time overruns on projects as normal, hence their perceived non-importance.

Table 1. Mean Importance, Weights and District Assemblies Rating for Evaluation Criteria

Evaluating Criteria			
	Mean importance	Weighting	DAs mean rating
<u>Planning Phase</u>			
Collection and appreciation of background information	2.81	1	2.93
Methodology and analysis	2.58	1	3.05
Feasibility studies and assessment of options	2.95	2	3.12
Quality of Final Recommendation	3.00	2	3.42
Adequacy of Cost Estimates	3.14	3	2.91
Presentation of Report	2.91	2	3.28
<u>Design Phase</u>			
Collection and interpretation of information	3.07	2	2.64
Design solution	3.35	4	3.14
Presentation of drawings	3.47	4	2.74
Cost estimates	2.95	2	3.35

<u>Tender phase</u>			
Quality of tender documents	3.49	4	4.05
Tender evaluation	3.58	4	3.35
<u>Construction phase</u>			
Recruitment, supervision and administration of site staff	3.19	3	2.81
Administration of the contract	3.28	3	3.02
Supervision of contractors and quality of end product	3.58	4	2.49
Financial control of contracts, including expenditure forecast	3.07	2	2.77
Handling of claims settlements	2.95	2	3.53
<u>Post Construction phase</u>			
Final measurement and final account	3.47	4	4.00
Final drawings and other records	2.95	2	2.05
<u>General</u>			
Appreciation of client's requirements	3.12	3	3.19
Programme, progress reports and financial forecasts	3.09	3	2.63
Management of sub-consultants	2.74	1	3.12
Achievement of project objectives	3.28	3	3.12
Effectiveness in surmounting problems	2.84	2	3.33
Public relations	2.86	2	3.47
Relationship with the client	3.02	2	3.47
Competence and conduct of consultant's staff	3.30	3	3.02
Responsiveness of consultants (principals)	3.21	3	3.30

5.2.2 Consultants' Quality Performance as Rated by District Assemblies

Table 3 further shows the mean rating of consultants by respondents for each criterion. The results show that consultants perform very well in the following project-related roles: *quality of recommendation, presentation of report, design solution, quality of tender documents, tender evaluation, handling of claims and final measurements and final accounts*. The results also show that DAs consultants perform poorly in *final drawings and supervision of contractors and quality of end product*. From the preceding section, DAs identified *supervision of contractors and quality of end product* as one of the most important roles of consultants by the DAs. The inability of the consultants to perform satisfactorily in this role therefore implies that consultants' output fell short of the expectations of the DA respondents. Under general roles of consultants, the DA respondents considered consultants to perform well in *effectiveness in surmounting problems, relationship with clients and responsiveness of consultants*. This

situation indicates good relationships between the DAs and their consultants, a healthy situation which is expected to enhance performance of consultants.

5.2.3 Consultants' Overall Quality Performance from District Assemblies' Perspective

Table 2 presents a summary of the results of the overall quality performance of DAs consultants. Consolidating the weight and mean rating of each criterion, consultants scored 62% of the maximum score in both project-related roles and general roles (Table 3). Since the performance score of the consultants on DACF projects is above 50%, it may be considered satisfactory. However, the consultants can do better than their current achievement, and they need to further improve their performance in order to meet the changing nature of work, increasing competition and specific improvement initiatives (Neely, 1999; Dixon *et al.*, 1990).

Table 2. Consultants' Evaluated Performance

Evaluation of Consultant performance	Rating (a)	Weight (b)	Weighted score =(a)x(b)
<u>Planning Phase</u>			
Collection and appreciation of background information	2.93	1.00	2.93
Methodology and analysis	3.05	1.00	3.05
Feasibility studies and assessment of options	3.12	1.00	3.12
Quality of Final Recommendation	3.42	2.00	6.48
Adequacy of Cost Estimates	2.91	3.00	8.73
<u>Design Phase</u>			
Collection and interpretation of information	2.64	2.00	5.28
Design solution	3.14	4.00	12.56
Presentation of drawings	2.74	4.00	10.96
Cost estimates	2.84	2.00	5.68
<u>Tender phase</u>			
Quality of Tender documents	4.05	4.00	16.20
Tender Evaluation	3.35	4.00	13.40
<u>Construction phase</u>			
Recruitment, supervision and administration of site staff	2.81	3.00	8.43
Administration of the contract	3.02	3.00	9.06
Supervision of contractors and quality of end product	2.49	4.00	9.96
Financial control of contracts, including expenditure forecast	2.77	2.00	5.54
Handling of claims settlements	3.53	2.00	7.06

<u>Post Construction phase</u>			
Final measurement and final account	4.00	4.00	16.00
Final drawings and other records	2.05	2.00	4.10
Total		51	158.58
<u>General</u>			
Appreciation of client's requirements	3.19	3.00	9.57
Programme, progress reports and financial forecasts	2.63	3.00	7.89
Management of sub-consultants	3.12	1.00	3.12
Achievement of project objectives	3.12	3.00	9.36
Effectiveness in surmounting problems	3.33	2.00	6.66
Public relations	2.98	2.00	5.96
Relationship with the client	3.47	2.00	6.94
Competence and conduct of consultant's staff	3.02	3.00	9.06
Responsiveness of consultants (principals)	3.30	3.00	9.90
Total		22	158.58

Table 3. Overall Satisfaction of District Assemblies

Scores	Project related score	General roles score
Maximum score	255	110
Received score	158.58	68.42
% score received	62.18	62.2

6. Conclusions

The study has shown that *design solutions, presentation of drawings, quality of tender documents and tender evaluation* are among the important roles of DAs consultants. District Assemblies are, however, not excited about the overall performance of their project consultants. The performance of DAs consultants on DACF projects requires further improvement in order to meet the changing nature of work, increasing competition and specific improvement initiatives. The findings show that DAs consultants perform well in project-related roles such as *quality of recommendation, presentation of report, design solution, quality of tender documents, tender evaluation, handling of claims and final measurements and final accounts*. The consultants also perform well in carrying out general roles such as *effectiveness in surmounting problems, relationship with clients and responsiveness of principals*. In the areas of *final drawings* in post construction phase and *supervision of contractors and quality of end product* in construction phase, however, the study showed that consultants do not perform very well. For DAs to achieve the expected full benefits and derive maximum satisfaction from the services of their consultants, it is recommended that they include evaluation of consultants in their contract

documents and also evaluate their consultants on all projects. This will ensure satisfactory performance and provide much needed feedback for consultants' continual improvement. It is also important to regularly train and educate District Assembly officials involved in recruitment of consultants on why evaluation of consultants is so vital in drawing up contracts. Funding for consultants should be carefully allocated since their effectiveness and efficiency are so vital for infrastructure development in the district. The findings are of value to local government entities, particularly in developing countries, realizing the need for performance improvement in the services of their consultants in order to ensure efficiency and increased productivity. The findings are also of significant to consultants of public institutions wishing to deliver on their roles and improve on the quality of their service, and seeking continual improvement. Further studies are recommended on performance evaluation of consultants of private clients in Ghana, and on development of a model for evaluation of performance DAs consultants on public projects acceptable to both consultants and clients.

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