

Chapter 5

The Success Model to Manage the Cross-Border Infrastructure Projects



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Abstract Cross-border cooperation (CBC) projects are essential for both sustainable development and creating an environment for entrepreneurship and investment. There is a strong correlation between the successfulness of implemented projects and the sustainable development of border regions. Because of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, the management of cross-border projects is becoming increasingly important, as Kazakhstan is located at the intersection of transcontinental corridors between Europe and China. A feature of cross-border interaction is that projects are implemented by different countries together, increasing the risks of cross-border projects. In this regard, it was essential to analyze successful examples of CBC projects to understand better how they affect and contribute to regional development and, based on the information collected, build a successful model of the cross-border and infrastructure projects. This paper explores the issues to build the model to manage cross-border projects successfully. In so doing, the study contributes to the search for critical success factors that underpin the model. There are two contributions to cross-border project management knowledge. The first contribution is in revealing the critical success factors. The second contribution demonstrates how the success model has been built. Our findings are a call for more research connecting the OBOR and project management issues.

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5.1 Introduction

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) projects are essential for sustainable development and creating an environment for entrepreneurship and investment [2]. From the beginning, the European Union (EU) promoted the idea that an increase in CBC “contributes to enhanced European integration,” “supports sustainable development” along borders, and “helps reduce differences in living standards” [11]. More than a third of EU citizens live and work in border regions. Borders, thus, both directly and indirectly affect their lives [7]. European Territorial Cooperation (INTERREG programs) “plays an important role in removing barriers and promoting sustainable cross-border cooperation” [24]. European researchers state about a strong correlation between implemented projects and the sustainable development of border regions [9, 19–21, 24, 26].

It is crucial to analyze successful examples of CBC projects to understand how they influence and contribute to regional development and construct the success model of cross-border projects based on the data collected.

According to Joanna Kurowska-Pysz [15], cross-border projects strengthen relationships between partners and are aimed at “achieving mutual objectives” that are important both for cooperating organizations and for the development of borderland where these projects are being implemented. Studying all factors that influence the success or failure of cross-border projects is critical “to reaching long-lasting territorial sustainability” [5]. At the same time, Liu et al. [18] highlight the importance of building “institutions for achieving effective cross-border governance,” paying much attention to the development of CBC in technological innovation. Due to economic integration, “a growing number of related projects are under planning or construction” [16].

Sanotska et al. [23] believe that market failures in border areas should be resolved at the state level; in particular, the programs of CBC developed by the governments of neighboring states should become the primary tool for moving toward economic equality in the regions of both countries.

The sources of the “innovation-entrepreneurial ecosystem’s growth” are the internal and external factors of development. External factors include “a proactive innovation policy” at the regional level with the support of “science-intensive manufacturers” [12].

There is no universally accepted definition of a cross-border project, although this term is popular and widely used. Two or more countries are implementing a cross-border project. On the other hand, any national infrastructure project can also be considered a cross-border project if it significantly influences the cross-border region. Examples of national projects with significant cross-border impact are transport infrastructure projects (land, sea, and air transport) that facilitate international transport, energy projects, the sale of electricity to neighboring countries, and the construction of cross-border telecommunication networks.

The Asian Development Bank's Regional Cooperation and Integration Strategy do not clearly define the concept of "cross-border infrastructure," but its distinctive feature is the presence of cross-border external effects not created by national projects. The cross-border infrastructure creates "additional" benefits that affect participating countries. It means that the net benefits from cross-border projects are greater than those obtained only in the framework of national projects [10]. There can be no doubt that infrastructure is critical to managing international trade across international borders. Transport infrastructure "has a long-run positive impact on economic development" [1]. At the same time, cross-border projects are "accompanied by high complexity, difficulty, and uncertainty" [17].

The analysis of [10] has shown that cross-border projects do not attract sufficient attention from relevant research, and there is no systematic study of cross-border project management models. Fujimura M. and R. Adhikari identified essential factors that contribute to the successful preparation and implementation of cross-border infrastructure projects [10]. They dwell upon the next ones: clear justification and formulation of the corridor's concept; using distribution analysis (as a component of situational analysis and input data for SWOT analysis) as a guide for a win-win option; fair public-private partnership; overcoming the limitations of transport infrastructure.

However, from the point of view of project management, these factors are not fundamental, although we do not deny them and understand that the more positive external effects of cross-border projects lead to better management and more stable cooperation between countries that implement the project and, therefore, the project itself can be more successful. We have decided to build and propose the success model of managing cross-border projects.

In general, there are two concepts in project management: (i) project success and (ii) project management success. Project success is the ultimate goal of any project, regardless of industry affiliation and sources of resource support. The project success characterizes the product's properties: its quality, its implementation on time, and the PR perception of the project product. In turn, the project management success is associated with compliance with the agreed parameters of the project, the level of professionalism, the skills of the project team, and the capability to interact with all stakeholders.

5.2 Literature Review

In recent decades, CBC has reached an unprecedented level not only because of its potential for territorial integration but also taking into account its role in supranational processes such as infrastructure construction, activity planning, and project implementation [3]. This interaction is becoming increasingly important when we live in a globalized world [4]. This scenario is evident in the case of the EU, the EAEU, and the OBOR initiative. In this regard, identifying success factors in managing cross-border projects is considered critical for achieving sustainable development

through CBC strategies that lead to a consistent improvement in the quality of life of the living population in these regions. From our point of view, it was essential to determine the set of these factors for managing cross-border projects successfully.

CBC, becoming one of the most critical cooperation priorities within the EAEU and the OBOR initiative, aims to strengthen cooperation between the EAEU member states and partner countries within the Silk Road Economic Belt.

CBC projects “can play a significant role in developing the local community” [13]. In addition, [13] argues that the cross-border nature of projects not only promotes mutually beneficial “transfer of knowledge and experience” but also “gives weight to a broader perspective” that a particular local need acquires through CBC.

At the same time, CBC has some disadvantages in situations of economic and institutional asymmetries. In this case, cross-border projects are subject to a higher risk. Peña Medina [22] believes that a central actor or network coordinator would allow the two administrative systems to be brought together and efficient cooperation. Although the public–private partnership (PPP) model is more effective in providing public goods, any CBC project case should be addressed separately [22]. Korneliuk et al. [14] have determined that in the conditions of strengthening integration processes between the border states, the need “to expand and deepen international relations between local self-government bodies grows.”

De Soyres, Mulabdic, and Ruta estimated the effects of the OBOR. According to them, the OBOR projects “increase GDP by up to 3.35% and 2.61% for BRI and non-BRI economies” [8]. On the other hand, for Kazakhstan, cross-border cooperation within the framework of OBOR should be carried out through the EAEU. In addition, the EU’s experience might come in handy.

Castanho et al. [6] have identified critical factors for success in the EU CBC projects. The findings of their study have coincided with our results on three critical factors: (i) General goals and plans of projects implemented by countries, strong territorial strategy; (ii) Political transparency and commitment; (iii) Good relations between countries (cities) to communicate. It suggests that the problems of CBC projects are typical for any region.

CBC can be divided into three distinct stages of development. At the first stage, the member states participating in the EAEU receive expert knowledge and undergo training, organize study tours to member states, and conduct feasibility studies on the potential of the border regions. It would create essential links between the member states and China. At the second stage, plans should be drawn up for socio-economic convergence between the border regions. Among other things, the planning of investment projects facilitates convergence. At the third stage, the regions jointly recognize the importance of regional development. Possible investments should be aimed at the formation of cross-border infrastructure to remove barriers at a border crossing. Regional bodies develop joint projects, and direct contacts between citizens and communities across the border are maintained.

Each country has its specific priorities to solve the common problems that it faces in CBC that is aimed at achieving common strategic goals as: to promote economic and social development; to solve common problems in the field of environment, health, safety, and security; and to ensure mobility of people, goods, and capital. The

strength of integration of neighboring countries lies in cooperation across national borders. By combining the resources of individual countries, it is possible to achieve more significant and better results that benefit everyone.

The OBOR Initiative consists of two projects: the twenty-first Century Marine Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt, whose goals are to deepen economic integration, eliminate barriers to investment and trade, and create a unified transport infrastructure. The Initiative supports infrastructure projects that go beyond national borders to improve cargo mobility and the ability of people to travel throughout Eurasia and beyond.

Dozens of cross-border projects involving at least two countries, either completed or under implementation, among hundreds of similar projects implemented worldwide, have outstanding achievements in creating a faster, safer, and more environmentally friendly transport network.

The lessons learned from successful cross-border projects can and should be used by other projects implemented within the EAEU and OBOR.

Cross-border infrastructure is necessary to support the economic development of states and the well-being of people. Cross-border infrastructure, located on the border of two or more states, having a beginning on the territory of one state and continuation on the territory of another, has specific characteristics. Cross-border projects based on interstate cooperation and within the framework of international corridors and international initiatives aim to create cross-border infrastructure to ensure the integration of countries in various industries. These projects solve problems that go beyond national development.

The first stage helps identify potential projects that meet the requirements of donors. For selecting projects that meet the requirements of funding organizations, a clear justification of cross-border and infrastructure projects is very important. The cross-border and infrastructure project compliance is determined by the requirements and procedures established by the funding organizations or source of funding. When analyzing the project's compliance with the requirements of donor organizations, it is essential to identify both problems and opportunities.

The second stage is aimed at preparing the project's documentation. In order to meet the requirements of the financing organization, the project's design must be developed under the established requirements for the selection, rules for filing applications, and all necessary procedures. At this stage, financial institutions can assist in preparing documentation and determining the financing source of the project.

Another critical step in preparing project documentation that has to meet the requirements of the financing organization is to understand the project cycle of the financial institution where the project proposal will be sent since any organization investing in a project has its project cycle. Particular attention should be paid to risk management because any discrepancies between the legislative framework and project management practice can create specific difficulties and thereby increase the investment risks of projects. In order to ensure that the cross-border project infrastructure project meets the requirements of the financing organizations, it is crucial to determine the protocol for sharing risks between the stakeholders at the early stage. It is essential to pay attention to the feasibility study, which should include

an assessment of various scenarios and the cross-border risks. One of the ways to manage risks should be insurance.

Another effective tool aimed at ensuring compliance of projects with the requirements of the financing organization is marketing research. Marketing research helps to establish a complete list of all stakeholders and identify and evaluate their interests concerning the project before its initiation.

The demand for cross-border infrastructure in Asia far exceeds available funding [10]. Development banks provide funds to support many cross-border projects to promote the social and economic development of the participating countries. OBOR has become a “catalyst...for facilitating transnational transport infrastructure projects” [25].

At the policy level, there are two main economic rationales for regional cooperation between two or more countries: (i) The need to take into account additional opportunities associated with the cross-border project and its positive and negative externalities; (ii) Defining the potential for achieving economies of scale to pursue national goals.

By doing this, all participating countries benefit from regional cooperation. However, the removal of physical and non-physical barriers to realize these benefits requires investment, as well as harmonization and simplification of relevant policies and procedures.

As for the first part of the primary economic rationale for regional cooperation, cross-border projects may attract additional preferential and non-preferential funds. Positive externalities (for example, benefits such as saving time and money, protecting the environment, and facilitating trade) and negative externalities (such as costs such as environmental pollution, human trafficking, and the spread of infectious diseases) occur when the consequences of one or several countries go beyond national borders. If the countries do not make joint agreements, there will be too few positive external factors and too many negative ones. As for the second rationale, regional programs and cross-border projects can provide economies of scale in providing public or private (market) goods and services beyond what any country can achieve alone. Thus, regional cooperation can help achieve national goals.

Cross-border infrastructure projects have an essential role in optimizing resource allocation, promoting sustainable development, and enhancing regional security.

5.3 Methods

To build the success model for managing cross-border projects (project management success model), we have determined the composition of the criteria taking into account the specifics of CBC. To simplify the model, we decomposed criteria into elements. When choosing the criteria, we were guided by the fact that the criteria for successful project management reflect the context and content components. The context (external environment of the project) determines criteria related to CBC. The criteria related to the internal environment of the project are attributed to the content

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching secondary information • In-depth interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Studies • Searching criteria for a success model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting primary information via survey; • Results Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Success Factors for Project Management under Cross-Border Cooperation

Fig. 5.1 Phases of the research. *Source* Compiled by the authors

and relate to any project. Therefore, the task of building the success model has been reduced to searching: (a) Context criteria related to CBC, (b) Content criteria related to project management issues, and (c) A number of criteria included in the success model.

To simplify the managerial processes of the project, we have narrowed down the number of criteria to a vital number of indicators using the Pareto chart. Based on field studies, both qualitative and quantitative ones, we have compiled a list of critical criteria for the success model and then identified the most critical ones.

The study aimed to identify and analyze the critical factors that determine the success of project management in cross-border projects and find out where the primary efforts should be applied to achieve sustainable development. As successful cross-border projects represent the critical step toward the prosperity of border areas, demand for these projects helps to create the basis to identify the main structural changes and policies aimed at solving the problems of regional sustainability.

However, developing a complete universal list of criteria for all projects seems impossible or at least difficult. In this regard, to achieve the study’s objectives, we have decided to choose such a design of the study that would include searching both secondary and primary information, research methods such as desk and field, preliminary and conclusive, including descriptive cross-sectional ones. The study has consisted of the phases shown in Fig. 5.1.

During the first phase, qualitative secondary and primary studies were used. Qualitative research in the form of in-depth interviews was conducted with project managers, civil servants, and experts. Interviews were also conducted with experts and specialists from the Institute of Project Management of Satbayev University.

During the second phase, we studied information directly related to cross-border projects within the framework of the OBOR initiative. The third and most active phase included a survey conducted online and the analysis of the results, which made it possible to determine the critical factors for the success of managing projects and to build a model for the success of managing cross-border projects.

5.4 Results

Thus, a literature review, combined with interviews with technical specialists, experts, key participants, and stakeholders of the CBC process and case study analysis of cross-border projects within the framework of the OBOR, revealed preliminary criteria for successful project management. In the case study analysis, information was analyzed on 20 projects implemented in Kazakhstan under the OBOR, which allowed identifying the 14 critical factors that determine the success of managing cross-border projects shown in Table 5.1.

The list of critical success factors for managing cross-border projects has become the deliverables of phase 2. Moving to the next phase, we compiled a questionnaire for online-offline surveys. The circle of respondents for this field research included specialists, project management experts, and employees of the performing organizations as team members and other stakeholders. To conduct a survey, we chose non-probability sampling; that is, we used convenience and snowball sampling methods. This type of sample was determined by the specifics of the subject of study. The sample size was $N = 77$ respondents related to project management and CBC.

The questionnaire for the survey was made both in electronic form (Google Form) and in paper form. The central part of the questionnaire was devoted to the critical success factors of managing cross-border projects (Table 5.1) and the general 12 critical success factors of managing any projects shown in Table 5.2, also determined by using case study analysis.

Because of the quarantine that took place in Spring 2020, the sample size turned out to be less than planned, but this did not prevent us from drawing certain conclusions that were necessary to build the success model for managing cross-border projects. The survey results are presented in Figs. 5.2 and 5.3.

A survey conducted among specialists, project management experts, as well as employees of the performing organizations, including members of project teams, as well as stakeholders, showed that the following factors are the most crucial ones for the success of managing cross-border projects:

Table 5.1 Critical success factors for managing cross-border projects identified using case study analysis

(1) Relations between countries (cities)	(8) Ensuring quality of life standards
(2) Attracting young and talented people	(9) General goals and plans of projects implemented by countries;
(3) Strengthening political commitment	(10) Citizen participation in decision making
(4) Strong territorial strategy	(11) Prevention of duplication of infrastructure
(5) Enhancing a sense of belonging	(12) Availability of diverse infrastructure
(6) Access to investment	(13) A stronger economy
(7) Political transparency and commitment	(14) Marketing and advertising

Source Compiled by the authors

Table 5.2 Critical success factors of project management, identified using case study analysis

(1) Clear goal setting	(7) Competent project management
(2) Proper decomposition of project objectives	(8) Support for project curators
(3) Promoting transparency	(9) Competent members of the project team and its permanent membership
(4) Commitment to project-related decisions	(10) Adequate information support
(5) Promoting communication within the project	(11) Search and correction of deviations according to the schedule and budget
(6) Promoting communications by stakeholders	(12) Feedback and customer focus

Source Compiled by the authors

Question: Select the most important (no more than three) factors that determine the success of managing cross-border projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (77 respondents)

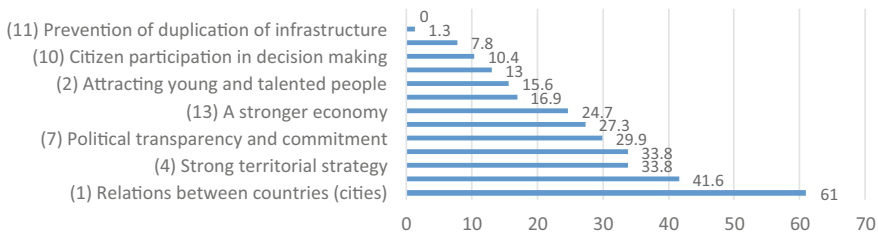


Fig. 5.2 Survey results on critical success factors for managing cross-border projects. Source Compiled by the authors

1. (1) Relations between countries (cities);
2. (6) Access to investment;
3. (4) Strong territorial strategy;
4. (9) General goals and plans of projects implemented by countries;
5. (7) Political transparency and commitment;
6. (12) Availability of diverse infrastructure;
7. (13) A stronger economy.

The listed factors from the most important to the less important were selected under the Pareto 80/20 law (Fig. 5.3). Thus, using field studies of online/offline surveys, seven key variables were selected, which formed the basis for the success model of cross-border projects under the OBOR initiative.

The following are the results of a survey on critical success factors for project management (Fig. 5.4).

The survey results showed that project management experts put in the first place such criteria for the success of project management as a clear goal setting, facilitating communication within the project, and finding and correcting deviations on the schedule and budget (which is essentially an analysis of the mastered volume).

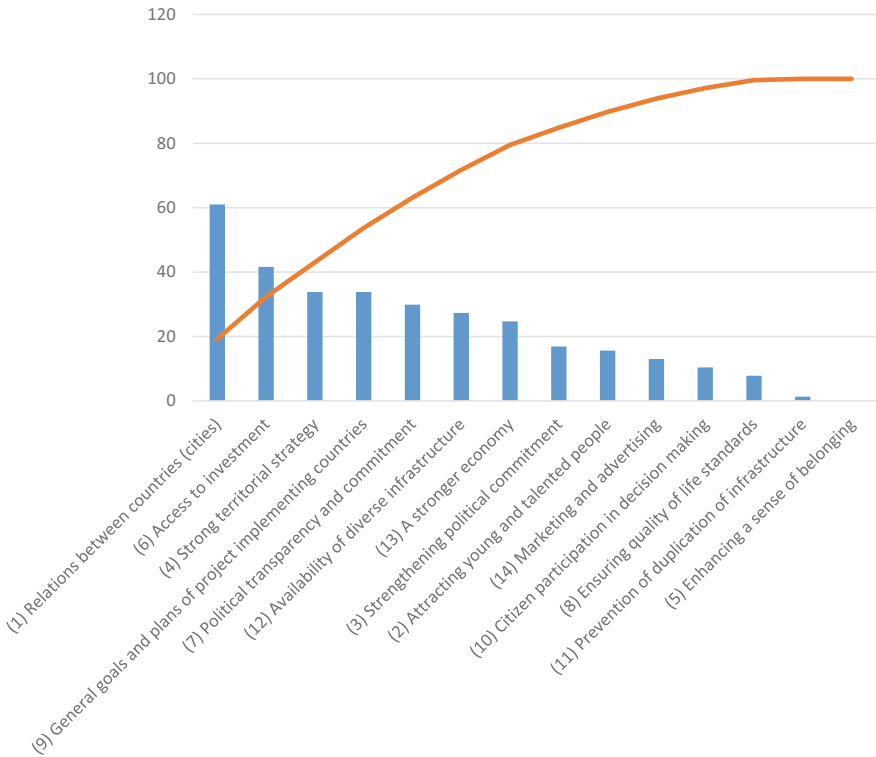


Fig. 5.3 Pareto diagram for selecting the most important success factors for managing cross-border projects. *Source* Compiled by the authors

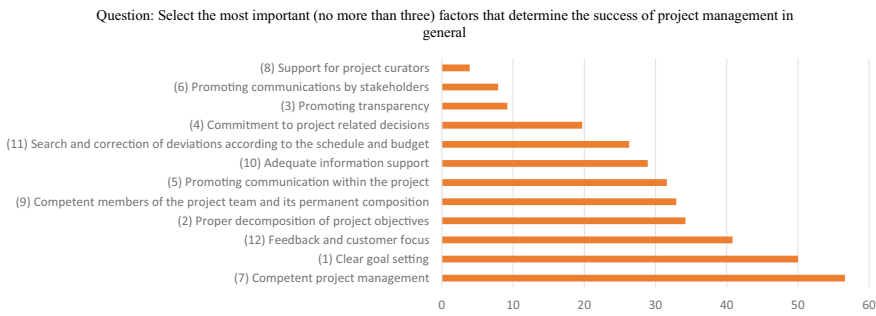


Fig. 5.4 Survey results on critical success factors for managing cross-border projects. *Source* Compiled by the authors

Further, as in the case of the criteria for the success of managing cross-border projects, we conducted a Pareto study to select criteria for a model of success in project management (Fig. 5.5).

Critical success factors for project management mainly depend on the types, attributes, and characteristics of an effective work team. Modern concepts and methods of personnel management allow us to evaluate the project team’s effectiveness and develop criteria for the success of project management. Some authors consider it necessary to form a project team taking into account the interpersonal relationships of employees and offer a criterion characterizing the contribution of

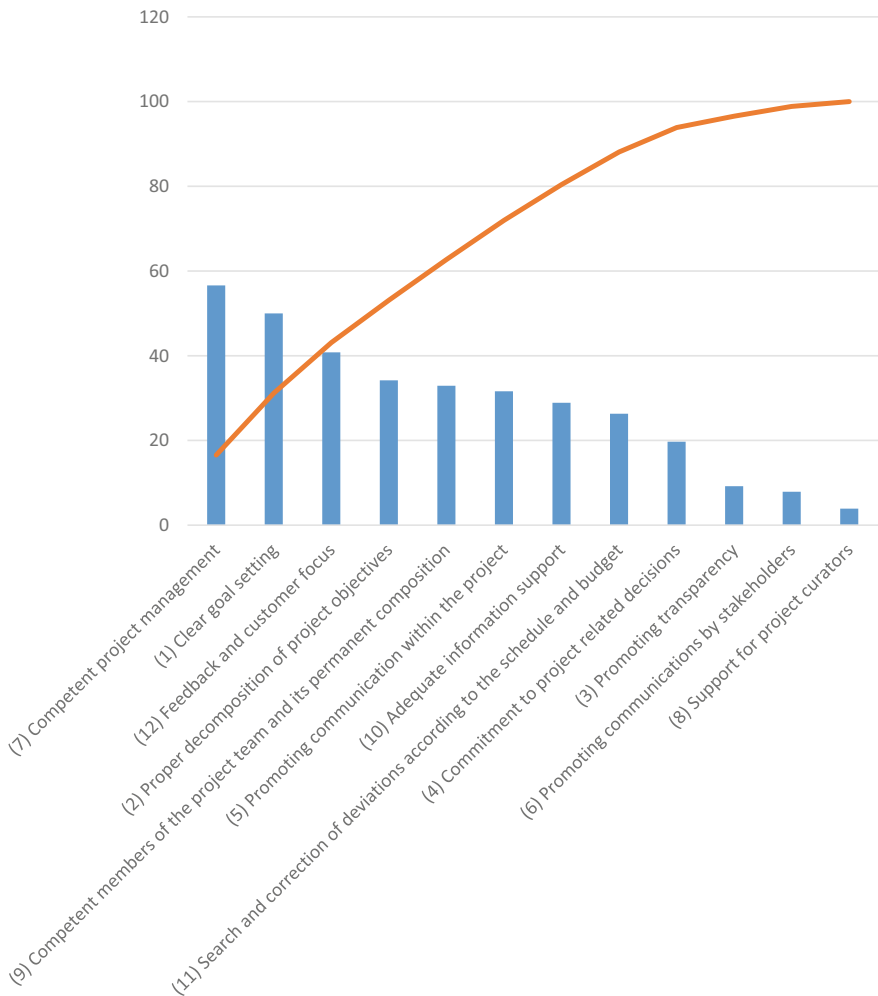


Fig. 5.5 Pareto diagram for selecting the most important factors for the success of project management. *Source* Compiled by the authors

Table 5.3 Content and context critical success factors of the cross-border projects

Content of the cross-border projects	Context of the cross-border projects
(1) Clear goal setting (2) Proper decomposition of project objectives	(9) General goals and plans of projects implemented by countries (4) Strong territorial strategy
(7) Competent project management	(12) Availability of diverse infrastructure (13) A stronger economy
(5) Promoting communication within the project (10) Adequate information support (12) Feedback and customer focus	(6) Access to investment (1) Relations between countries (cities)
(9) Competent members of the project team and its permanent membership	(7) Political transparency and commitment

Source Compiled by the authors

employees to group interaction [27]. However, we do not take into account the interpersonal relations of team members and take into account only managerial factors, which then will form the basis of the model for successful management of cross-border projects:

1. (7) Competent project management;
2. (1) Clear goal setting;
3. (12) Feedback and customer focus;
4. (2) Proper decomposition of project objectives;
5. (9) Competent members of the project team and its permanent membership;
6. (5) Promoting communication within the project;
7. (10) Adequate information support.

To form the success model, we analyzed, combined, and collated the content (internal) and context (external) critical factors shown in Table 5.3.

Thus, the case study results, interviews, and online/offline surveys allowed us to identify the most important critical factors for successful project management in the context of CBC and form the success model, as shown in Fig. 5.6.

In the model's center, we have presented the content factors that generally correlate with routine project management. On the outer petals of the model (a, b, c, d), we have presented contextual factors associated with the external environment necessary for successful project management in CBC.

It is important to note that internal and external factors are related. For example, if C factors as communications, information, and feedback are essential for any project. In the context of CBC, communications between countries and cities and access to investments are crucial. This part of the model is responsible for the communications of the cross-border projects.

If we talk about the analytical model, then it looks like this:

$$A = f \{x_i; y_j\}, \quad (5.1)$$

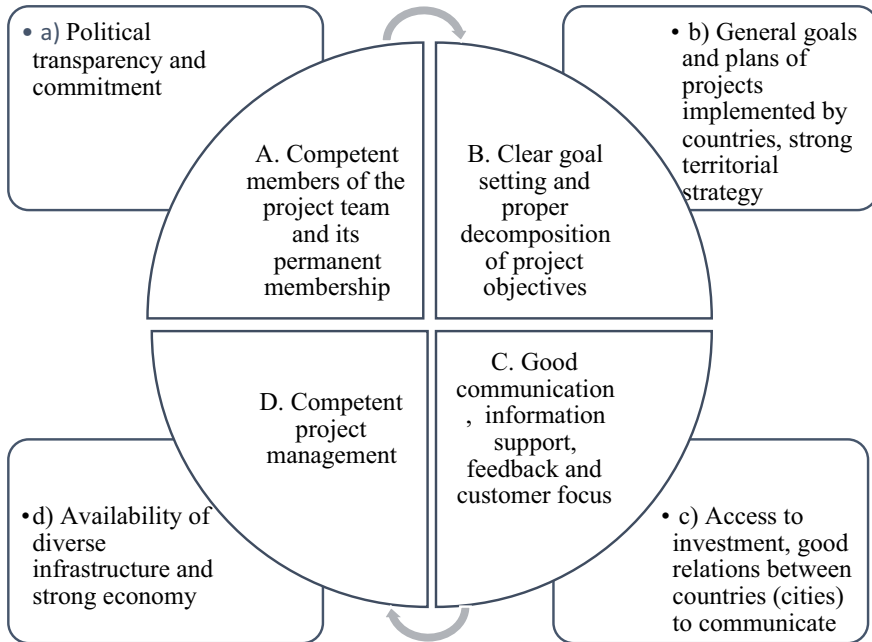


Fig. 5.6 Project management success model in a CBC. *Source* Compiled by the authors

where A is the success of project management in the conditions of CBC, which depends on the function f;

x_i —critical success factors for project management (content);

y_j —critical success factors for managing cross-border projects (context).

It is vital to ensure the quality of the project at the initial stage. It is about providing the quality characteristic of cross-border projects at the project preparation phase, on which the subsequent stages of the project cycle depend. Uncertainty of the purpose of the project usually leads to inadequate analysis.

5.5 Conclusion

In recent decades, CBC has reached an unprecedented level not only because of its potential for territorial integration but also taking into account its role in supranational processes such as infrastructure construction, activity planning, and project implementation. This interaction is becoming increasingly important when we live in a globalized world. This scenario is evident in the case of the EU, the EAEU, and the OBOR initiative. In this regard, identifying success factors in managing cross-border projects is considered critical for achieving sustainable development through

CBC strategies that lead to consistent improvement in the quality of life of the living population in these regions. From our point of view, it was essential to determine the set of these factors for managing cross-border projects successfully.

The strength of the integration of neighboring countries lies in cooperation across national borders. By combining the resources of individual countries, it is possible to achieve more significant and better results that benefit everyone.

As for the first part of the primary economic rationale for regional cooperation, cross-border projects may attract additional preferential and non-preferential funds. Positive externalities (for example, benefits such as saving time and money, protecting the environment, and facilitating trade) and negative externalities (such as costs such as environmental pollution, human trafficking, and the spread of infectious diseases) occur when the consequences of one or several countries go beyond national borders. If the countries do not make joint agreements, there will be too few positive external factors and too many negative ones.

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