

**IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF INVESTMENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT
IN CONSTRUCTION IN DAI TU DISTRICT, THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE,
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Vietnam**ABSTRACT**

The management of construction investment projects plays a crucial role in infrastructure development and socio-economic promotion. In Dai Tu District, Thai Nguyen Province, the Construction Investment Project Management Board is a key agency responsible for implementing and overseeing significant construction projects. Efficient project management not only enhances the quality of life for local residents but also creates a solid foundation for the sustainable development of Dai Tu District. This article analyzes the current situation and proposes several solutions to improve project management efficiency in Dai Tu District.

Keywords:

Management, project, construction investment, Dai Tu District, Thai Nguyen Province.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of Vietnam's push for industrialization and modernization, development investment is a strategic task and a key solution to achieve sustainable and stable economic growth. Investment projects not only build technical infrastructure for the economy but also guide investment and address important social issues. Project management is a crucial factor in ensuring the efficiency of investment projects. It is an essential part of the activities of any organization involved in implementing and managing projects. To improve the quality and strengthen the management of construction investment, various issues must be systematically and comprehensively addressed. Each issue has certain impacts on management, so proposing adjustment or enhancement solutions needs to be based on serious research to identify the causes of limitations and shortcomings.

Although the management of construction investment projects funded by the state budget has been improved and perfected, there are still many weaknesses and shortcomings due to their specific and complex nature. Negative phenomena are still quite common in basic construction activities funded by the state budget, directly affecting the quality and progress of works, causing significant losses and waste. This is a matter of deep concern for the State and society. In recent years, Dai Tu District, Thai Nguyen Province has received attention from various levels and sectors in investing in infrastructure development for socio-economic growth using various funding sources. The Project Management Board of Investment and Construction in Dai Tu District is the key unit supporting the District People's Committee in managing construction investment projects in the area in accordance with the purpose, sequence, and investment procedures stipulated by the State. Completed projects have proven effective, enhancing physical infrastructure for socio-economic development, in line with the aspirations of the people.

However, there are still some limitations such as delays and shortcomings in the appraisal, approval of design documents, cost estimates, bidding documents, and tender results. The work of acceptance, settlement, and final accounting has not been carried out in accordance with regulations. Meanwhile, the requirements for construction investment project management are increasingly high and professional. Therefore, it is

necessary to study and propose solutions to improve the quality of management of construction investment projects in Dai Tu District, Thai Nguyen Province.

2. CURRENT STATUS OF CONSTRUCTION INVESTMENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN DAI TU DISTRICT, THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE

The Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District is a specialized management board under the People's Committee of Dai Tu District, assigned as the investor of projects funded by the district's budget and higher-level budget support, performing project management functions and tasks, and providing project management consultancy when necessary. Therefore, the Management Board plays an important role in implementing the socio-economic development tasks of the district.

Table 1. Number of Projects in the Period 2021-2023

Stages	2021	2022	2023	2022/2021		2023/2022	
				Number of Projects	Percentage (%)	Number of Projects	Percentage (%)
Investment Implementation	4	8	13	+4	+100	+5	+62,5
Project Completion	1	4	7	+3	+300	+3	+75
Transition Project	3	8	18	+5	+166,7	+10	125

(Source: Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District)

The number of investment projects by stage is relatively large, increasing over the years; From 2021 to the end of 2023, the district has assigned the Construction Investment Project Management Board to implement construction investment for 25 projects and has completed 07 projects. Among them, the number of projects implemented from 2021 to 2023 is higher in the following year than the previous year. Therefore, it can be seen that the economic development rate of Dai Tu District, revenue collection in the area is always higher in the following year than the previous year, and construction investment activities receive corresponding attention, making the appearance of Dai Tu District increasingly spacious, modern, bright, green, clean, and beautiful.

Entering the implementation phase of the national socio-economic development plan in general and Thai Nguyen Province in particular, facing favorable opportunities inheriting the achievements of innovation in socio-economic development; stable economic, political, and social situation; the legal system continues to be renewed, improved; integration into the world economy is increasingly deep and broad... has created conditions to promote socio-economic development.

With the efforts of the Party committee, government, and people of Dai Tu District, all ethnic groups have united, innovated, and determinedly implemented the successful realization of the planned socio-economic development goals. Planning work is being implemented fairly synchronously, creating a breakthrough foundation for attracting investment, mobilizing resources for socio-economic development. Completion and deployment of implementation of some large-scale planning such as the socio-economic development plan of Dai Tu District for the period 2021-2030, land use planning until 2025, adjustment, expansion of the general planning of Hung Son town until 2025, planning for the center of Quan Chu town, planning for the western gateway of the district and province in Yen Lang commune, planning for new rural construction; planning for

tea development... Paying attention to the planning of development of residential areas and renovation of existing residential areas contribute to building new rural areas towards civilization, modernity.

From 2021 to 2023, the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District has deployed and implemented 25 projects, of which 07 projects have been completed, and 18 projects are under construction. The results of the investigation into project preparation work at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District are evaluated as follows:

Table 2: Project Preparation Work at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District

Project Preparation Work	Average Score	Level of Significance
Planning of schedule is well implemented	4,1	Agree
Budget planning is well implemented	4,1	Agree
Planning of necessary resources is well implemented	4,1	Agree
Cost planning is completed on time	4,2	Agree
Approval process is conducted promptly	3,1	Uncertain

(Source: Author's survey data, 2023)

The survey results indicate that the project approval process is still slow, with an average rating of 3.1. This is entirely consistent with the actual conditions, as the approval process involves many people and units. The ratings for the project preparation criteria are at the level of agreement. Among them, the criterion for cost planning is rated the highest, with an average score of 4.2.

In the future, the Management Board needs to have directions to further improve the approval process to enhance the management of investment and construction projects in Dai Tu District.

The survey results on the project appraisal work at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District are evaluated as follows:

Table 3: Project Appraisal Work at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District

Project Appraisal Work	Average Score	Level of Significance
The appraisal process is conducted objectively	3,5	Agree
Project appraisal is carried out on schedule	3,2	Uncertain
Project approval is completed on schedule	4,2	Agree
Project appraisal staff are competent	3,1	Uncertain
Project appraisal staff perform their work objectively	3,1	Uncertain

(Source: Author's survey data, 2023)

The survey results on the project appraisal work of the Construction Investment Project Management Board of the district show that the criteria for project appraisal are rated from uncertain to agree. Three criteria are rated as uncertain: "Project appraisal staff are competent" with an average score of 3.1; "Project appraisal is carried out on schedule" with an average score of 3.2; and "Project appraisal staff perform their work objectively" with an average score of 3.1.

These are areas where the Construction Investment Project Management Board of the district needs to focus on and proactively improve the quality of design consulting, the professional qualifications of project technical staff, and internal quality control of consulting products before submitting for appraisal to achieve

better project management. The remaining criteria are rated as agree or completely agree. Among them, "The appraisal process is conducted objectively" and "Project approval is completed on schedule" are rated as agree.

The survey results on the contractor selection work at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of the district are evaluated as follows:

Table 4: Contractor Selection Work at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District

Contractor Selection Work	Average Score	Level of Significance
Selecting contractors with sufficient capability to execute the project and appropriate bid prices	3,2	Uncertain
The contractor selection process is conducted objectively and accurately	4,2	Agree
The contractor selection process meets the efficiency requirements of the investment project	4,1	Agree

(Source: Author's survey data, 2023)

The survey results show that the contractor selection work at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District is well implemented. The aspects of "selecting contractors objectively and accurately," "selecting contractors who meet the efficiency requirements of the investment project," and "selecting contractors with appropriate bid prices" are all highly rated.

The survey results on the quality management of construction works at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of the district are evaluated as follows:

Table 5: Quality Management of Construction Works at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District

Quality Management of Construction Works	Average Score	Level of Significance
Quality standards are determined for each project component	4,2	Agree
Quality assurance is well implemented	4,1	Agree
Quality control is well executed	4,1	Agree

(Source: Author's survey data, 2023)

The survey results indicate that the quality control work of construction projects at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of the district is rated as agreeable. The evaluation criteria for quality management of construction works have scores ranging from 4.1 to 4.2, indicating agreement. This shows that the quality management of the projects overseen by the Construction Investment Project Management Board is well implemented.

Cost management assesses the financial efficiency of a project to save project costs and the state budget. Regarding cost management of projects, the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District follows the decrees and guidance circulars: Decree No. 68/2019/ND-CP dated August 14, 2019, of the Government; Basic Construction Unit Price List of Thai Nguyen Province. The Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District manages project costs through the management of the total

investment cost estimate, total budget estimate, and final settlement of construction works. Additionally, attention must be paid to the costs and management of contract package implementation to ensure accurate cost aggregation into the project price, avoiding waste and loss.

The survey results on cost management of construction projects at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District are evaluated as follows:

Table 6: Cost Management of Construction Projects at the Construction Investment Project Management Board of Dai Tu District

Cost Management of Construction Projects	Average Score	Level of Significance
Costs are managed according to the approved budget	4,2	Agree
Funds are allocated according to the plan	4,6	Strongly agree
Payment procedures are convenient	4,6	Strongly agree

(Source: Author's survey data, 2023)

The survey results on cost control of construction projects at the Project Management Office for Investment and Construction of Dai Tu district are highly rated (with opinions ranging from agree to strongly agree). Regarding project implementation progress, the survey results show that projects are progressing normally. However, some projects are behind schedule, which could be due to slow funding allocation or approved plans with subsequent adjustments affecting project timelines.

3. GENERAL EVALUATION OF INVESTMENT AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN DAI TU DISTRICT, THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE

3.1. Achievements

It can be affirmed that the results of Investment and Construction Project Management in Dai Tu district are encouraging and have brought about significant changes, with many new projects constructed, renovated, or upgraded, contributing significantly to the socio-economic development of the district. These successes can be attributed to the following main reasons:

Investment capital from the State budget is mainly focused on building socio-economic infrastructure, as well as national security and defense. State-funded projects mainly focus on areas such as transportation, culture, education, healthcare, and public welfare.

Each year, the district has mechanisms for budget allocation, management, and operation to save budget expenditures for development investment. Savings from investment in construction projects are accumulated annually.

Administrative procedure reforms in the field of investment and construction have shortened the time for project appraisal and approval procedures, resulting in efficient Investment and Construction Project Management.

Investment and construction management gradually become standardized. The number and quality of activities in the field of investment and construction management are increasing. The competency of the Project Management Office and consulting organizations is improving, and equipment for Investment and Construction Project Management is gradually being upgraded, attracting more attention to investment.

3.2. Existing Limitations and Challenges

In the process of preparing feasibility study reports by consulting parties for projects, delays often occur, prolonging the approval process at relevant authorities, which slows down project implementation. Although most small tasks for project approval are swiftly resolved, for large and complex projects, decision-making processes take a considerably long time. Delays at the supervising authorities significantly affect project timelines and construction phases.

Land clearance faces difficulties due to various factors affecting the rights of residents, leading them to deliberately defy government regulations and construction units. Delays in implementation compared to the

initial plans require additional operational funds. Moreover, residential area projects managed by the Project Management Office as investors often have large scales and lengthy investment periods. Limited investment capital leads to a staged approach to land clearance, resulting in increased land clearance costs due to rising land prices. Inaccurate budgeting for land clearance often necessitates adjustments to the total investment amount, requiring additional funding and affecting project completion timelines. (According to survey data, the prevalence of delayed land clearance is over 80% and affects construction timelines.)

The issue of quality has not yet been adequately addressed in all projects. Many projects are implemented without serious and effective management, resulting in project outcomes and efficiency falling short of requirements. Resource wastage and losses, particularly common in investment capital losses, are prevalent. The quality of construction is not guaranteed, and construction timelines do not adhere to plans. This can be explained by the insufficient allocation of budget for management tasks, rendering them ineffective. Many projects, to ensure timely completion, force construction units to operate ineffectively, resulting in subpar construction quality and creating pressure on construction units.

4. SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF INVESTMENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN DAI TU DISTRICT, THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE

To improve the quality of investment project management in construction in Dai Tu district, Thai Nguyen province, a series of specific and practical solutions need to be implemented. Firstly, shortening the time for feasibility study report preparation and approval is necessary. Utilizing modern project management software helps minimize time and effort in report preparation and revision, while streamlining approval procedures through close coordination with relevant authorities. Regarding land clearance work, dialogue and explanation with residents to resolve grievances fairly are necessary, along with budget allocation aligned with reality and phased land clearance planning to avoid cost escalations due to land price hikes.

Dealing with harsh weather conditions, proactive construction planning and adjusting schedules accordingly are effective solutions to optimize work time. Additionally, ensuring safety and environmental protection requires serious and detailed environmental impact assessments, along with increased supervision throughout the construction process. To improve design survey work, training and capacity building for consulting staff are necessary, along with enhanced quality control of project documents, designs, and estimates to minimize unnecessary adjustments and supplements.

Quality management during construction needs to be enhanced by establishing high-quality standards and implementing strict supervision, along with clear reward and penalty mechanisms to encourage contractors to adhere to standards and schedules. Reporting and monitoring work need improvement by building project management databases for each project, regularly updating construction progress, resolving issues, and ensuring prompt and comprehensive reporting. Implementing these solutions in a coordinated manner will help Dai Tu district improve project management effectiveness, contributing to sustainable and socio-economically efficient local development.

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