



FUNDING AGENCY ENGAGEMENT: A PANACEA TO IMPROVING COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS IN KIGOMA, TANZANIA.

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ABSTRACT: *Agricultural development projects are essential for advancing food security, livelihoods, and rural economic growth, particularly in low and middle-income countries where agriculture underpins community well-being. However, their long-term success depends on meaningful and inclusive funding agencies' engagement throughout the project cycle. The objective of this study was to examine the influence of funding agencies' engagement on the performance of agricultural projects in Kigoma Region. Data was collected from AMCOS members, government officials, project team members, and community leaders using structured questionnaires. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression (SPSS V26), while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Findings revealed that funding agencies' engagement ($\beta = 0.404$, $p = 0.000$) portrayed the positive-statistically significant predictor, implying that financial oversight, technical guidance, and continuous support from funding institutions substantially enhanced project performance. The study concluded that effective, inclusive, and well-structured engagement by funding agencies enhances the accountability, efficiency, and sustainability of agricultural projects. It recommends formalizing early-stage co-design meetings with funding agencies before project approval and drafting MoUs that outline roles, expected outputs, and funding timelines. Funding agencies' engagement allows the timely completion of projects within budget, which strengthens participatory governance structures, optimizing early and sustained engagement of funding agencies.*

KEYWORDS: Funding Agencies' Engagement, Performance, Agricultural Projects, Kigoma Region, Sustainability, Accountability, Resource-Based Theory.



INTRODUCTION

Agricultural development projects have long been regarded as critical instruments for advancing food security, economic empowerment, and rural development, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where agriculture forms the backbone of livelihoods and national economies (Alawode, 2025; Barrett et al., 2022). These projects cover diverse interventions such as increasing productivity, enhancing market access, upgrading value chains, promoting sustainable resource management, and empowering communities through skills-building and financing opportunities (Balakrishnan & Zass, 2023; Bernard & Giraud Héraud, 2024). However, despite these ambitions, there is growing evidence that the long-term success and sustainability of agricultural development initiatives depend not only on the technical design of project activities but also on the strength and inclusivity of funding agency engagement throughout the project cycle (Beyuo, 2024; Zulu et al., 2025).

The funding agency engagement is recognized globally as a transformative strategy to enhance project effectiveness, foster local ownership, and promote sustainability (Session, 2010). When funding agencies are genuinely involved in articulating project goals, sharing knowledge, allocating resources, making decisions, and providing feedback, projects are more likely to be inclusive, accountable, and adaptive to local realities (Kashim & Zikri, 2025). Stakeholders like the funding agencies' involvement helps build trust, increases transparency, and facilitates the early identification of challenges and opportunities during project implementation (Roth et al., 2024). Moreover, this engagement can stimulate social learning and empower communities to transition from passive recipients of aid to active co-creators of their own development pathways (Kosec, 2025). In this way, funding agencies' engagement contributes not only to improved project performance but also to stronger, more resilient, and community-owned agricultural outcomes (Session, 2010).

Statement of the problem

Despite widespread acknowledgment that funding agencies' involvement in agriculture improves agricultural project performance, accountability, and sustainability, many projects in Tanzania, especially in Kigoma Region, continue to suffer from insufficient and inconsistent funding agency involvement (Amanje, 2022; Kaburire, 2019). Globally, evidence confirms that effective funding agency participation enhances project ownership, improves delivery efficiency, and boosts adaptability to local needs (Mgoba & Kabote, 2020). In countries like Japan and the United States, engagement practices are institutionalized and have produced measurable improvements in transparency, cost efficiency, and performance (Fuhrmann-Aoyagi et al., 2024). However, many developing countries still fall short of implementing such practices.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya has seen NGO-driven projects improve completion rates by up to 25% thanks to effective funding agencies' engagement, while other countries, such as Ghana continue to struggle with engaging grassroots actors meaningfully (Kamau et al., 2024). In Tanzania, NGO-led agricultural projects tend to integrate stakeholders more effectively, producing stronger local learning and improved outcomes (Kaburire, 2019), while government-led interventions still often rely on centralized, top-down approaches with little room for community participation (Amwata et al., 2019; Salim, 2025). In Kigoma Region, despite high agricultural potential and multiple interventions, project outcomes remain inconsistent because funding agencies are not fully engaged across planning, implementation, and evaluation phases



(Manumbu, 2020). Contributing factors include weak coordination, limited training, and underdeveloped frameworks for stakeholder participation (Amwata et al., 2019). In Kigoma Region, where farmers are farming at the subsistence level, they have been facing the challenge of poor yields and low-quantity harvests in mixed crops, particularly beans and maize (UNCDF, 2023).

Additionally, many projects prioritize fulfilling external reporting requirements rather than empowering communities and strengthening local learning systems, a pattern documented in the evaluation of donor-funded projects across Tanzania (Amanje, 2022). As a result, evaluations and reports may not reflect local realities and the living experiences of stakeholders, undermining sustainability and long-term effectiveness (Manumbu, 2020). Therefore, this study addresses the core problem of limited and underutilized funding agencies' engagement in agricultural projects, especially those concentrating on mixed products farming, which constrains performance, reduces community ownership, and limits the long-term impact of agricultural interventions in Kigoma, Tanzania (Chami Avit, 2020; Kaburire, 2019).

Research Objective

This study mainly seeks to determine the influence of funding agencies' involvement on the performance of community agricultural projects in Kigoma, Tanzania.

Research Question

What role do funding agencies' involvement play in the performance of agricultural projects in Kigoma, Tanzania?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

Resource-based Theory (RBT)

Resource-Based Theory (RBT), popularized by Barney (2000), argues that the success and sustained advantage of an organization or project largely depend on its ability to access, develop, and strategically deploy resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and well-organized (VRIO framework). While initially conceived in a business and strategic management context, RBT is increasingly applied to development projects, including agriculture, to explain why some initiatives succeed where others fail (Saani et al., 2025). In the context of agricultural projects in Kigoma, RBT suggests that funding agencies represent critical human and social resources with local knowledge, networks, and skills that can significantly enhance project performance (Moses et al., 2023). Engaging these stakeholders as key resources allows projects to tap into their experiential wisdom about weather patterns, soil quality, cropping systems, and socio-cultural dynamics, which external technical experts alone might overlook.

Projects that harness these intangible resources build a form of competitive advantage through improved design, higher adoption rates, and stronger local ownership (Saani et al., 2025). For example, a farmer cooperative in Kigoma may have long-standing trust networks and collective



mobilization skills that can help implement new agricultural technologies more effectively than top-down outreach. According to Usadolo & Caldwell, (2016), community-based structures and local agricultural extension networks serve as “institutional memory,” providing lessons from past successes or failures that are crucial for adapting projects to local contexts. In this way, funding agencies’ engagement is not merely an ethical imperative but a strategic resource decision that can make or break project outcomes.

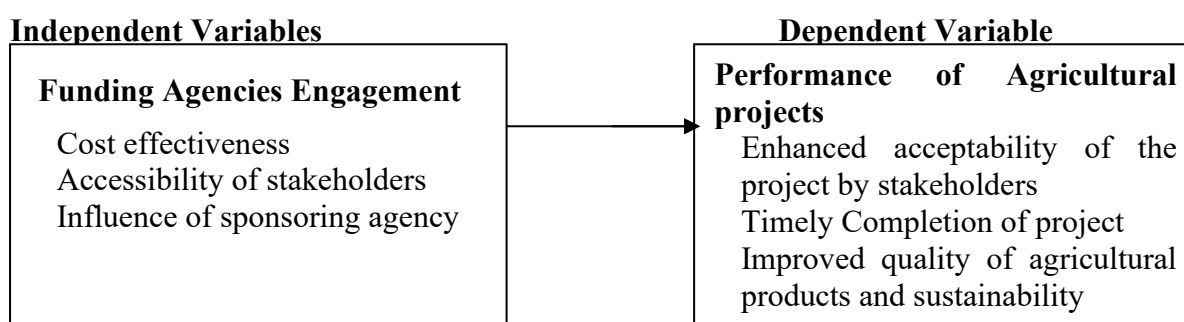
RBT further emphasizes that for funding agencies’ engagement to be effective, projects must invest in building and strengthening these resources. This includes training farmers on group facilitation, supporting women’s associations in recordkeeping, or strengthening the management skills of village councils. Projects that underinvest in these capacities often struggle with weak participation, poor data quality, and ultimately disappointing results (Saani et al., 2025). In Kigoma, where agricultural projects sometimes rely on under-resourced village offices or poorly trained field staff, capacity-building is a crucial step to unlock the full potential of funding agencies’ engagement as a performance-enhancing asset.

Recent scholarship has confirmed that RBT provides a powerful lens to examine agricultural development. For example, Sarapura-Escobar (2025), found that agricultural projects with robust investments in stakeholder capacity, such as digital information systems, farmer field schools, and local leadership training, performed markedly better on yield improvements, market access, and long-term sustainability. These findings highlight the VRIO perspective in practice: stakeholder engagement is valuable, difficult to replicate, deeply embedded in community culture, and can become a strategic advantage if nurtured properly. Moreover, RBT supports this study’s focus by framing stakeholder engagement as a deliberate investment in local human, social, and institutional resources that can boost the performance of agricultural projects in Kigoma. Rather than seeing funding agencies as passive players, RBT positions them as critical resources whose active and empowered participation is central to achieving durable, contextually relevant development outcomes (Moses et al., 2023).

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study was based on the premise that funding agency involvement directly influences the performance of agricultural projects in terms of effectiveness, sustainability, and community ownership. The framework emphasizes the interconnectedness of these variables in achieving successful agricultural development outcomes in Kigoma. (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework





Funding agencies' involvement and project performance

Internationally, funding agencies have increasingly recognized that their engagement in promoting stakeholder participation improves project legitimacy and effectiveness (Lele et al., 2021). Donors who supported local ownership and co-creation of solutions achieved better results and more durable impacts. In developed countries, for example, the European Union's Rural Development Program explicitly includes stakeholder engagement requirements, which have led to higher innovation adoption rates among farming communities (Gambelli et al., 2023). Similarly, in the USA, participatory grant-making processes have strengthened accountability and responsiveness of agricultural projects (Grieger et al., 2022).

In developing countries, donor involvement is even more critical given historical power imbalances. Khan et al., (2022) in Bangladesh showed that participatory funding models increased transparency and reduced opportunities for corruption. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Amwata et al., (2019) highlighted that donor-supported community engagement frameworks improved project trust and reduced conflicts. However, challenges remain where funding agencies fail to adapt to local institutional dynamics or ignore grassroots voices, resulting in weak ownership and poor outcomes.

In East Africa, evidence from Kenya shows that World Bank-funded community-driven initiatives performed better when donors required stakeholder committees to monitor and guide project implementation (Kamau et al., 2024). Similarly, in Uganda, participatory funding conditions improved stakeholder commitment to project success (Pék et al., 2019). In Tanzania, Amwata et al., (2019) found that funding agencies that insisted on participatory planning saw stronger community buy-in and better results. However, in Kigoma, most funding models remain top-down, limiting true community participation Enabel – Belgian Development Agency (2015), and this reinforces the need for rethinking donor practices to fit local stakeholder contexts.

Performance of agricultural projects

Globally, the performance of agricultural projects has been widely examined as a multidimensional construct encompassing efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, beneficiary satisfaction, adoption of innovations, and timely completion of interventions. Agricultural project performance is increasingly assessed not only in terms of output delivery but also in terms of long-term socio-economic and institutional impact. Pretty (1995), argued that successful agricultural projects are those that enhance local capacity, strengthen ownership, and ensure sustained productivity improvements beyond the project lifecycle. Similarly, Chambers (1997), emphasized that agricultural performance should be evaluated based on its contribution to livelihoods, empowerment, and resilience rather than short-term output indicators alone.

The performance of agricultural projects can be measured through multiple dimensions, including effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and stakeholder satisfaction (Bathaei & Štreimikienė, 2023). Performance indicators often cover productivity gains, improved livelihoods, strengthened value chains, enhanced food security, and long-term community benefits (Zhang et al., 2021). Research shows that projects that are inclusive, participatory, and responsive to local priorities tend to achieve higher performance outcomes than those that apply top-down, externally driven approaches (Usadolo & Caldwell, 2016).



In developed countries, agricultural project performance is closely linked to institutional strength, technological integration, and effective stakeholder coordination. In Canada and Australia, irrigation and conservation projects have achieved high performance levels due to strong governance structures, effective monitoring systems, and participatory implementation frameworks (Keremane & McKay, 2011; Mussehl et al., 2023). The European Union's rural development initiatives demonstrate that projects integrating accountability, stakeholder collaboration, and adaptive management tend to report improved cost efficiency, higher innovation adoption rates, and greater environmental sustainability (Gambelli et al., 2023). These cases illustrate that performance in agricultural projects extends beyond financial metrics to include sustainability and stakeholder satisfaction.

In developing countries, however, agricultural project performance often faces structural and institutional constraints. Roth et al., (2024), documented in India that although many agricultural initiatives achieved short-term output targets, sustainability and long-term impact were weakened by limited community ownership and weak institutional follow-up. Similarly, Carter et al., (2022), observed in Latin America that projects incorporating farmer field schools performed better in terms of technology uptake and productivity gains compared to top-down extension models. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Sulemana et al., (2018), reported that agricultural projects frequently struggle with delays, resource mismanagement, and limited adoption of improved practices, particularly where stakeholder engagement and institutional accountability mechanisms are weak.

Within East Africa, evidence suggests that agricultural project performance varies significantly depending on stakeholder coordination and institutional. Pék. et al., (2019), found that irrigation schemes in Uganda that incorporated participatory governance structures demonstrated higher maintenance rates and improved productivity outcomes. In Kenya, Kamau et al., (2024), reported that community-driven agricultural initiatives achieved better budget compliance and timeliness compared to centrally managed programs. These findings suggest that performance is closely linked to the degree of inclusivity and collaborative governance embedded within project structures.

In Tanzania, several studies highlight mixed performance outcomes in agricultural projects. Amwata et al., (2019), observed that projects in regions such as Arusha and Kilimanjaro performed relatively well due to strong cooperative networks, institutional capacity, and stakeholder collaboration. Conversely, projects in less institutionally developed regions often experience challenges related to coordination inefficiencies, limited adoption of agricultural innovations, and weak sustainability mechanisms. Enabel–Belgian Development Agency (2015), noted that agricultural projects in western Tanzania, including Kigoma, have faced difficulties in ensuring long-term sustainability, timely completion, and consistent community ownership due to infrastructural limitations and institutional capacity gaps.

Despite these insights, empirical studies in Tanzania have primarily measured performance using descriptive indicators without systematically linking performance outcomes such as budget adherence, sustainability, beneficiary acceptability, adoption of good agricultural practices, and timeliness to structured stakeholder engagement dimensions. Moreover, limited studies provide quantitative evidence assessing the strength and direction of these relationships within under-researched regions like Kigoma. Therefore, while the broader literature confirms that agricultural project performance depends on institutional capacity, participatory



governance, and adaptive management systems, there remains insufficient context-specific empirical evidence examining performance as a measurable dependent variable influenced by multidimensional stakeholder engagement in Kigoma Region. This study addresses this gap by operationalizing project performance through measurable indicators and empirically testing its relationship with key stakeholder engagement dimensions within the Kigoma context.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of a funding agency's engagement factors on the performance of community agricultural projects in Kigoma Region, Tanzania. The design was appropriate because it enabled the collection of data from diverse respondents involved in project implementation, coordination, and oversight, while allowing the researcher to describe existing conditions and relationships among study variables.

The study was conducted in Kigoma Region, Tanzania, an area characterized by extensive agricultural activity and the implementation of donor-supported agricultural interventions. The region was considered suitable due to the presence of Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies (AMCOS), aggregation centers for farm produce, and development projects supporting both host communities and refugee populations.

The target population comprised 901 respondents drawn from AMCOS members, government officials, project team members, and community leaders who were directly involved in agricultural project implementation. Using Yamane's Formula at a 5 percent margin of error, a sample size of 277 respondents was determined.

Using Yamane's Formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Whereby:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = Margin of error (0.05)

1 = Constant

Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{901}{1 + 901(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{901}{1 + 901(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{901}{1 + 2.2524}$$



$$n = \frac{901}{3.2525}$$
$$n = 277$$

Stratified random sampling was applied to ensure proportional representation of each stakeholder category, while purposive sampling was used to select respondents with relevant knowledge, particularly project staff and officials involved in funding and implementation processes.

The research instrument used for primary data collection was a structured questionnaire containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The instrument captured information on funding agencies' involvement and project performance. Questionnaires were administered physically and through online Google Forms, while Kiswahili versions were provided to the local farmers and AMCOS members who are not conversant with the English language to enhance comprehension among respondents.

Content validity of the instrument was ensured through expert review and supervisor assessment to confirm clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, where a threshold of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable. A pilot study involving 28 respondents outside the study area was conducted to refine the instrument and improve consistency.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, which was selected due to its reliability, wide acceptance, and user-friendliness. It has been specifically selected due to its ability to perform both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses effectively (IBM Corp, 2019). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize responses, while multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the effect of project team competency and funding agencies' involvement on agricultural project performance.

RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSIONS

In the main study, a total of 277 questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents, and 260 questionnaires were fully completed and returned, resulting in a 93.86% response rate. This exceptionally high response rate indicates full participation of the targeted respondents and demonstrates strong engagement with the study. As noted by Holtom et al., (2022), and Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), response rates above 80% are generally considered excellent in social science research. Therefore, a 93.86% response rate significantly strengthens the robustness and credibility of the study findings.

Descriptive statistics

Funding agencies' involvement and performance of agricultural projects

This study examined the extent to which funding agencies' involvement influenced the overall performance of agricultural projects in Kigoma Region. Funding agencies are critical external stakeholders whose financial support, oversight mechanisms, and strategic involvement shape project direction, accountability, and sustainability. Six Likert-scale statements were used to



assess the nature and extent of funding agencies' participation in planning, implementation, financial management, repeated investment, and relationship management.

Table 1: Funding agencies' involvement and performance of Agricultural projects

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Funding agencies actively participate in project planning processes	0.0	45.6	0.0	39.7	14.7	3.08	1.01
Funding agencies actively engage stakeholders during project implementation	0.0	30.3	3.1	48.4	18.1	3.54	1.03
Funding agencies provide timely funding for the project	0.0	15.0	1.9	60.9	22.2	3.90	0.93
Financial oversight provided by funding agencies helps in minimizing cost overruns	0.0	5.0	1.9	49.4	43.8	4.32	0.75
Funding agencies have repeatedly funded multiple agricultural projects in the region	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.1	55.9	4.56	0.50
Funding agencies have maintained good relations with project leaders and team members for future funding opportunities	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.3	73.8	4.74	0.44

Theoretically, RBT conceptualizes financial capital as a strategic resource that enables the mobilization of human, technical, and institutional capabilities necessary for project success. Therefore, examining the involvement of funding agencies provides insight into how external financial stakeholders contribute to agricultural project performance.

The findings in Table 1 show that 39.7% of respondents agreed and 14.7% strongly agreed that funding agencies actively participated in project planning processes, while a substantial 45.6% disagreed. The overall mean score of 3.08 indicates a moderate level of agreement, leaning toward neutrality, and the relatively high standard deviation (1.01) reflects considerable variation in perceptions. These findings suggest that funding agencies' involvement at the planning stage was not consistently perceived across projects. While some respondents recognized their active engagement, a significant proportion viewed funding agencies as less involved in early decision-making processes. This implies that planning functions were primarily driven by implementing agencies or project teams rather than funders. These findings align with Poncin (2024), who argued that donor agencies often exert influence without fully engaging in localized participatory planning. However, they contrast with Phommachanh et al., (2024), who emphasize donor participation in project design as critical for sustainability and accountability.

The results further indicate that 48.4% of respondents agreed and 18.1% strongly agreed that funding agencies actively engaged stakeholders during project implementation, while 30.3% disagreed and 3.1% were neutral, as shown in Table 1. The mean score of 3.54 suggests moderate agreement, though the high standard deviation (1.03) again reflects diverse



perceptions. These findings imply that funding agencies played a more visible role during implementation compared to planning, yet their engagement was not uniformly experienced. Implementation-phase involvement may include monitoring visits, reporting requirements, and stakeholder consultations. The findings are consistent with Lienje (2026), who found that donor monitoring positively influences project performance. However, they also reflect concerns raised by Cooke & Kothari (2001), who argued that donor involvement may sometimes prioritize compliance over genuine participatory engagement.

Moreover, Table 1 shows that 60.9% of respondents agreed and 22.2% strongly agreed that funding agencies provided timely funding for the projects, while 15.0% disagreed and 1.9% were neutral. The mean score of 3.90 indicates strong agreement. These findings suggest that funding flows were generally reliable, contributing positively to project implementation timelines and operational efficiency. Timely disbursement of funds ensures continuity of activities, procurement of inputs, and payment of personnel. From an RBT perspective, financial capital is a foundational resource that enables other strategic capabilities. Delays in funding can disrupt implementation and weaken stakeholder confidence. The findings align with Institute (2000), which identifies financial stability as a determinant of project performance. Similarly, the work of Celasun & Walliser (2008), and Patrick Saez et al., (2021), emphasizes that predictable funding enhances development effectiveness. However, the presence of some disagreement indicates that funding delays may still occur in certain instances, potentially affecting performance consistency.

Additionally, the majority of respondents (49.4% agreed and 43.8% strongly agreed) indicated that financial oversight provided by funding agencies helped minimize cost overruns, with only 5.0% disagreeing, as shown in Table 1. The mean score of 4.32 reflects strong agreement, and the moderate standard deviation (0.75) indicates consensus. These findings imply that monitoring and accountability mechanisms instituted by funding agencies strengthened financial discipline. Oversight mechanisms likely included auditing procedures, reporting requirements, and expenditure tracking systems. RBT suggests that effective management of financial resources enhances project efficiency and sustainability. The findings are consistent with Fernández-I-Marín et al., (2024), who found that donor oversight improves financial accountability in development projects. However, Ndibaru & Ongwae (2023), cautioned that excessive external control may increase administrative burden, potentially slowing implementation processes.

Furthermore, all respondents expressed agreement, with 44.1% agreeing and 55.9% strongly agreeing that funding agencies had repeatedly funded multiple agricultural projects in the region. The high mean score of 4.56 and low standard deviation (0.50) indicate strong consensus, as shown in Table 1. These findings suggest sustained commitment of funding agencies to agricultural development in the Kigoma Region. Repeated funding signals institutional confidence in project management structures and perceived performance success. The RBT also implies that sustained financial support strengthens organizational capacity and continuity. The findings align with Freeman (2010), who emphasized long-term stakeholder relationships as central to organizational success. They are also consistent with FAO (2021), reports highlighting the importance of continuous donor engagement in strengthening agricultural systems.



Moreover, the mean score (4.74) was recorded for maintaining good relations between funding agencies and project leaders, with 26.3% agreeing and 73.8% strongly agreeing, as shown in Table 1. No neutral or negative responses were recorded, and the low standard deviation (0.44) indicates overwhelming consensus. These findings imply that strong relational capital existed between funding institutions and implementing teams. Positive relationships enhance trust, communication efficiency, and future collaboration opportunities.

Funding agencies' engagement and the performance of agricultural projects.

This section presents the inferential statistical analysis conducted to examine the relationship between funding agencies' engagement factors and the performance of agricultural projects. Specifically, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to determine the extent to which funding agencies' involvement influenced project performance. The regression coefficients were determined to indicate to what magnitude the funding agencies' involvement has an impact on the community agricultural project performance in Kigoma region.

Regression Coefficients

Regression coefficients are numerical estimates in a regression model that indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. Specifically, a regression coefficient (β) shows how much the dependent variable is expected to change when one independent variable increases by one unit, while holding other variables constant. A positive coefficient indicates a direct (positive) relationship, whereas a negative coefficient indicates an inverse (negative) relationship. The size of the coefficient reflects the strength of the effect, and its statistical significance (p-value) determines whether the relationship is meaningful or occurred by chance. Thus, regression coefficients help explain the individual contribution of each predictor in influencing the outcome variable.

Table 2: Regression coefficients results

Variable	B	Std. Error	T	Sig.
Constant	2.819	0.405	6.958	0.000
X ₃ Funding Agencies' Involvement	0.404	0.043	9.478	0.000

From the findings, the established equation became:

$$Y = 2.819 + 0.404X_1$$

Whereby, Y = Performance of Agricultural Projects, X₁ = Funding Agencies' Involvement.

The regression coefficient results presented in Table 2 revealed varying levels of influence of stakeholder engagement factors on the performance of agricultural projects. The constant term ($\beta = 2.819$, $p = 0.000$) indicated that when all independent variables were held constant, the baseline level of project performance remained positive and statistically significant. Funding agencies' involvement ($\beta = 0.404$, $p = 0.000$) emerged as the strongest positive and statistically significant predictor, implying that financial oversight, technical guidance, and continuous support from funding institutions substantially enhanced project performance.



Empirically, these findings are consistent with Ndlela & Worth (2024), who reported that beneficiary participation significantly improves development project outcomes when institutional frameworks are supportive. Similarly, Phommachanh et al., (2024), found that strong sponsor and funding body involvement positively influences project performance.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study concludes that funding agencies were pivotal external stakeholders whose involvement substantially influenced agricultural project performance in Kigoma Region. While participation during the planning phase was moderate, their engagement during implementation, financial oversight, repeated funding commitments, and relationship management were strong and positively associated with project efficiency, accountability, and sustainability. Timely fund disbursement, effective monitoring mechanisms, and collaborative relationships with project teams were particularly instrumental in minimizing cost overruns and ensuring smooth implementation. Therefore, sustained, proactive, and strategically coordinated involvement of funding agencies is essential for enhancing project outcomes, highlighting the need to integrate financial stakeholders early in project planning and maintain consistent engagement throughout the project lifecycle.

Recommendations of the study

Funding agencies' involvement and performance of agricultural projects in Kigoma region

First, policymakers and project initiators should formalize early-stage co-design meetings with funding agencies before project approval. MoU should clearly outline roles, expected outputs, and funding timelines. This ensures alignment between financial priorities and project objectives. Second, funding agencies and financial managers should establish clear disbursement schedules and digital financial reporting systems, even simple spreadsheet-based tracking, shared with project teams. This will enhance transparency and reduce delays. Third, funding agencies, district officials, and project managers should conduct joint quarterly supervision visits and annual financial audits, with written feedback reports shared among stakeholders. This strengthens oversight while maintaining collaborative relationships. These actions are feasible within Tanzania's decentralized governance framework and strongly supported by RBT.

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