

Role of Consulting Engineers in Project Implementation

MANI SAMUEL, PROCON ENGINEERS,

Bangalore

Consulting engineers have a very important role to play in the successful completion of any project. He is concerned with three specific aspects of project implementations viz. Technical, financial and management.

The most important responsibility of the consulting engineer is to provide competent and appropriate technical advice. For this, he depends on the technical education that he has under zone, coupled with the practical experience of many years he has been in the field of project engineering. More often a purely theoretical solution has to be tempered with a practical approach, arising out of the experience. This brings out the outmost importance of experience in the successful practice of consultancy services.

It is very important that consulting engineers keep abreast with the latest technological developments and new products/processes introduced in the field of his specialisation. Books, periodicals, product catalogues, technical seminars etc. provide the necessary inputs.

The best technical solution need not be satisfactory if the cost attached to it is exorbitant. This aspect is often overlooked and sometimes resented by consulting engineers. However, it is to be borne in mind that the business/project to which advice is given has to operate in a fiercely competitive market and the cost of the final product depends on the cost of the project/capital equipment that is required to be put up. It is the responsibility of the consulting engineers to project a realistic cost estimate so that adequate financial budgets are provided for execution of the work. In case of any revision necessitated by changed requirement/process during the execution stage, cost revision should immediately be intimated to the authorities for necessary sanctions.

Project management is an important role of consulting engineers. In India, unfortunately, project management practices are usually not followed seriously. The reasons for it are many: lack of adequate technical staff from contractor's side etc. However, the usefulness of project management techniques can not be ignored. As a key agency, responsible for execution of the job, consulting engineers can influence adoption of project management techniques in the construction industry.

In all the above aspects, role of consulting engineers is complementary to the staff from the clients side. Success or otherwise of consulting engineers in project execution depends largely on the accuracy of inputs from the owners/users and the support he receives from them.