Abstract

The dissertation addresses the issue of monitoring strategic projects in the Polish central government administration (CGA) as a key mechanism linking the implementation of public policies with the responsible management of resources, supported by managerial data. The starting point is the observation of a tension between the growing complexity of governmental undertakings and the need for coherent oversight, transparency, and high-quality decision-making information. The literature is dominated by project-oriented approaches from the private sector perspective, whereas in the public sector—particularly at the central level—there is a lack of integrated models combining portfolio structuring, project governance, monitoring processes, and organizational as well as tool-related enablers. The gap concerns both the conceptualization of monitoring in relation to governance (the role of the PMO, portfolio boards, responsibilities, and roles) and the adaptation of modern technological and competency solutions to the specifics of CGA. In Polish administrative practice, systemic elements are present (e.g., solutions developed by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister), yet audit reports and implementation experiences indicate the absence of full consistency, differences in project maturity across units, and fragmented data streams. This dissertation addresses these challenges by developing and validating the MMPS-CGA model for monitoring strategic projects in central government administration, aimed at standardizing terminology and processes, embedding monitoring within governance structures, and aligning organizational, human, and technological layers into a single, implementable framework.

The main objective was to design and preliminarily verify empirically the utility of the MMPS-CGA model, which integrates the organizational, process, people, and tools domains into a single solution that provides coherent oversight, monitoring, and reporting frameworks. The specific objectives included: ordering concepts and best practices, diagnosing the state and needs of monitoring in the Polish CGA, identifying priority areas with the highest importance and implementation feasibility, and constructing as well as testing the model in practice. Four research questions followed: which areas the model should encompass, whether they have implementation potential, to what extent the proposal meets the needs of key stakeholders, and which administrative unit goals it supports and how. The hypothesis that the author's MMPS-CGA model—as a strategic project monitoring tool in CGA—ensures the achievement of the goals of administrative units and their key stakeholders was subsequently verified.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion. The bibliography comprises 296 items; the text contains 43 tables and 57 figures. Chapter One presents a systematic literature review (PRISMA, VOSviewer bibliometrics). Chapter Two

deals with the conceptualization of the problem and definitions (e.g., strategic project, portfolio, project governance, monitoring, controlling). Chapter Three examines organizational and technological determinants (stakeholders, PMO, supporting tools). Chapter Four reports a Delphi-based expert study identifying relevant and feasible areas. Chapter Five—being the core of the work—details the construction of the MMPS-CGA model (domain architecture, components, relationships, implementation sequence). Chapter Six provides qualitative validation of the model and implementation recommendations. The approach is aligned with current public management trends: transition to data-driven management, professionalization of PMOs in the public sector, tightening of portfolio governance, and synchronization of the project–program–portfolio levels.

The theoretical underpinnings are anchored in five core areas: project governance (structures, roles, responsibilities, and decision-making mechanisms); the supervision–monitoring–management–control nexus (monitoring as continuous tracking of progress and variances, supervision as a governance function); portfolio and program management (selection, prioritization, balancing, and managing interdependencies); the role of the PMO (standardization, data consolidation, competency development, decision support); and stakeholder management (identification, engagement, communication, and expectations). The operationalization of concepts was adapted to the needs of the CGA: a strategic project is defined as a highly complex undertaking critical to state objectives; a portfolio as an aggregate of projects and programs managed at the strategic level; the portfolio board as the decision-making body shaping the portfolio and monitoring benefits; monitoring as the process of generating managerial information to support decision-making. The theoretical model took the form of an architecture with four domains (Organization–Processes–People–Tools), three aggregation levels (portfolio–program–project), and three temporal-functional perspectives (definition–management–monitoring).

The research followed a mixed-methods design, with a practical orientation, comprising four stages. First, a systematic literature review (PRISMA) was conducted (Scopus, Web of Science, 2013–2023), supplemented by a bibliometric analysis (VOSviewer) and a narrative review of governance, monitoring, and tool support concepts. Second, an analysis of PMO and tool implementations in public and private sectors (including UAE, USA, Botswana, Poland) was carried out, with a critical assessment of their suitability for the CGA context. Third, a Delphi study (CAWI survey) with CGA PMO experts was conducted to assess the importance and feasibility of identified areas. Fourth, qualitative validation of the model was performed through three in-depth interviews with representatives of high-impact monitoring roles: a PMO

officer, a project manager, and a sponsor. The research process was sequenced as: theory and diagnosis of the strategic project monitoring problem in CGA → identification of areas and model construction → validation.

Quantitative results demonstrated high consistency among expert panel assessments. Ten areas of confirmed importance and implementation feasibility were identified, notably: developing and tailoring IT tools to administrative specifics and user needs; developing the competencies of key stakeholders (project managers, PMO, decision-makers); conscious building and management of the portfolio (categorization of strategic projects, selection and prioritization rules); and ensuring a coherent vision and resources within programs (inter-project management and benefits realization). Qualitative results confirmed the completeness and feasibility of the model; all interviewees deemed all components important, with organizational adjustments (strengthening PMO and portfolio board roles), implementation of an integrated IT tool, and standardization of portfolio, program, and project definition and monitoring processes as priorities. In terms of impact on organizational goals, potential benefits identified included increased project effectiveness and efficiency, improved transparency and accountability, strengthened strategic and legal alignment, and enhanced quality of managerial information at decision points.

The principal outcome is the MMPS-CGA model described in a multidimensional, operational manner. The Organization domain covers two key governance nodes: the Project Monitoring Office (PMO), with clearly defined responsibilities (data collection, verification, and integration; preparation of managerial information; initiating standardization and continuous improvement; supporting managers); and the portfolio board as a strategic decision-making body (activation, selection, prioritization, closure, benefits monitoring). The Processes domain is defined at three levels (portfolio, program, project) and three perspectives (definition, management, monitoring) using SIPOC notation; includes, at the portfolio level, strategic project categorization (A–D) and aggregate decision indicators; at the program level, conditions for meaningful aggregation (synergistic benefits, shared resources, target-state vision); at the project level, the full life cycle with decision gates and integral management documentation (from charter and plan through risk, quality, issue, and change registers to closure report and post-project benefits monitoring). The People domain connects building a community of practice (cyclical knowledge-sharing formats, case studies, facilitation) with developing methodological and soft skills for managers, teams, PMO staff, and decision-makers. The Tools domain comprises a triad of processes for creating, maintaining, and evolving IT solutions based on user-needs analysis (user stories), with clearly differentiated

permissions and views (from granular data for managers and PMO to aggregate dashboards for decision-makers). The model also defines an implementation sequence: establishing and strengthening the PMO and portfolio board first, then unifying processes, and finally building competencies and implementing the IT tool, thereby minimizing implementation risks.

The theoretical contribution lies in integrating dispersed approaches to strategic project monitoring in public administration into a coherent governance architecture and in structuring concepts and relationships at the intersection of supervision, monitoring, control, and controlling. The conceptual model harmonizes project–program–portfolio levels and links them with organizational, people, and tool domains. The applied contribution consists of delivering an implementable template: roles and responsibilities (portfolio board, PMO, managers, teams), processes (SIPOC across three levels and perspectives), management documentation, IT tool requirements, and a recommended implementation sequence. Practical recommendations highlight the need for top-level sponsorship (leader onboarding), avoiding duplication of competencies and functions between units, and iteratively launching IT functionalities in a "process before tool" logic. The findings further indicate the design principle of IT tools based on unified processes and roles, with customized views and permissions, and automated aggregation of portfolio indicators.

The study is subject to three main limitations: its contextual focus exclusively on the Polish CGA (excluding territorial and local government administration), the limited size of the quantitative sample, and the absence of post-implementation data (the model has not yet been deployed at scale). Future research directions include cross-national and cross-sectoral comparisons (including replication tests outside Poland), assessing implementation outcomes using hard metrics (effectiveness, timeliness, costs, product and benefit quality), integrating advanced analytics and artificial intelligence into the decision-making stream (while simultaneously addressing data governance and ethical issues), and exploring potential adaptations of the model in economic organizations.

In light of the overall body of evidence, the dissertation's hypothesis was confirmed: the MMPS-CGA model meets the criteria of scientific and practical usefulness and constitutes a reference proposal for organizing the oversight and monitoring of strategic projects in the Polish central government administration, combining organizational, process, competency, and informational order within a unified, implementable solution.

Keywords: project monitoring; public administration; strategic projects; central government administration; monitoring model;