



Is your PMO on the road to success?

**How to make sure your PMO
is having the right influence**



The Middle East is pushing the boundaries of transformation with mega and giga projects, such as the Qatar 2022 World Cup and the \$500 billion smart city NEOM in Saudi Arabia¹, drawing the attention of the world to the region. Project Management Offices (PMOs) are the engine driving the delivery of these huge undertakings, but at times even PMOs can find themselves disconnected from the ultimate ambitions and strategy they are working towards. This is not a new dilemma for PMOs in the Middle East, the pace of change means the outcome of a project often has to be retrofitted to a new strategy or vision which has been formulated during a project's execution.

Senior project and transformation leaders in the region are eager to reduce this need for retrofitting, our latest research demonstrates. Instead we heard a call to place the PMO at the heart of strategy and its subsequent delivery; reducing the so-called 'strategic gap' and promoting the PMO as an essential component of transformation.

The question is, how do you ensure that the PMO is seen as a critical component to strategic alignment? Our research highlights how you can elevate the reputation of the PMO and the skills within to keep you close to your goals.

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-neom-project-idUKKBN29F0L8>

Starting your journey: Designing a PMO that will establish good governance

An influential PMO has a mandate to create structures and processes that are critical to help projects succeed and achieve the ultimate ambitions of the organisation. Consistent methodologies and processes are important, but an effective PMO will put in place a structure to ensure compliance with PMO processes and support the realisation of project outcomes and benefits. PMOs should be part of the organisational strategy from the programmes and processes that are put in place, down to departmental compliance and

procurement. All these moving parts need to be considered as part of an ecosystem which supports the successful execution of strategy.

Organisations should challenge themselves to involve PMOs in the initiation discussions for a new project. This allows the PMO to showcase their capability in implementing a consistent methodology across ongoing projects, as well as articulating and tracking how the project supports the organisation's ultimate ambitions. Additionally, PMOs involvement at project inception allows it

to support benefits management throughout the project lifecycle, by identifying and tracking what is most important for the organisation on its journey to success.

Our research found particular challenges in the Middle East in young organisations with relatively new PMOs. At these early stages of maturity, PMOs are focused on developing processes and methodologies, reducing time and resources to focus on strategy. This is where the role of technology and off the shelf solutions can play an important role

in freeing up PMO resources to focus on strategic alignment. While needing to be mindful that any tech solutions are fit for purpose for their organisation, ready made technological solutions can help accelerate maturity. For example, quickly implementing dashboards that have built in automation to report on project KPIs. However, PMOs need to be wary of rushing the introduction of complex technological solutions. In the experience of our interviewees, the more complicated they are, the greater the risk of introducing bottlenecks into processes.

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We are supporting the Ministry with strategy development and project management methodology, or what we call execution methodologies and performance measurement. The Ministry, supported by the PMO, has been very successful in coming up with a strategy in full alignment with the direction of the government. It provides a full strategy based on a results based methodology, supported by a dashboard of performance management, and implementing processes that will help in the execution.

Planning and Quality Leader
Government and Public Sector, Qatar



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The PMO needs to have visibility across the organisation. One solution for this is to build in cross checks with the PMO in departmental manuals. For example, linking procurement processes with the PMO, so the PMO is aware of ongoing projects. Bottom up is good for visibility, the PMO can examine project business cases and ask ‘is this aligned with our strategy?’

ePMO Leader
Tourism and Culture Sector, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Maintaining a steady course: Getting the right measures in place to support decision making

Mature PMOs will be thinking about how they deliver visibility and accountability for project execution; namely, thinking about the measures and KPIs that will mean the most to the organisation. C-Suite executives will be looking for the data that helps guide their decision making – data that flags risks and supports opportunity. Our research highlighted a desire amongst PMO leaders for stronger links to the C-Suite through tracking relevant KPIs or regular

touchpoints, providing the PMO with a clear mandate to check alignment across the organisation's portfolio and make adjustments as necessary. This in turn makes the PMO more influential to decision makers who will be provided with real time visibility of their portfolio and will find their decision making ability enhanced, allowing them to make the right decision at the right time.

Reaching your destination: Having the right people, in the right place, for your PMO to be effective

The PMO cannot achieve strategic alignment alone – the different functions across an organisation need to be engaged. Getting this integration right is largely down to the influential role project managers play on the ground. High performing project managers are no longer just creatures of scope and scheduling – instead they are project influencers. They join parts of an organisation together by creating a single language through the business.

If your PMO is connected across functions, you should be dispensing an army of emotionally intelligent, relationship building human resources – which will be adding considerable value to each function and to the overall goals of the organisation. By putting in place good governance and measurement through the PMO, you are elevating your ultimate asset – the project manager – to support a reduction in the strategic gap.



I believe having champions, representatives of the PMO in each department will facilitate efforts – having the same language between everyone. You are moving as one organisation not one department.

Strategy and Innovation Leader

Government and Public Sector, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



How can you get the right route map in place for your organisation?

When it comes to choosing the structure of your organisation's PMO, whether it might be an Enterprise Project Management Office (ePMO), a transformation office or a hybrid model, there is no one size fits all. Whatever your PMO looks like, it should feel agile – able to feed information back

up to decision makers and form a 360° process in which the organisation and the PMO can continually adapt strategies as it reacts to internal and external changes. As long as you think about these steps in your journey, your PMO will be the engine in your organisation driving success.

This report is part one of four from PwC's Middle East transformation and project management research series. Part two in our series focuses on the PMO ecosystem and how elevating the key functions of a PMO supports successful transformations.



Does our research resonate?

1

Does your PMO set the tone for what good looks like?

2

Is your PMO providing visibility across your organisation?

3

Are your organisation functions speaking the same language to each other?

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