



The Delivery Engine - powering growth for Saudi development companies



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Executive summary



Vision inspires people. Delivering on that vision builds nations. The organisations that build the delivery mechanism will set the standard for development at national scale to realise the objectives of Vision 2030.”

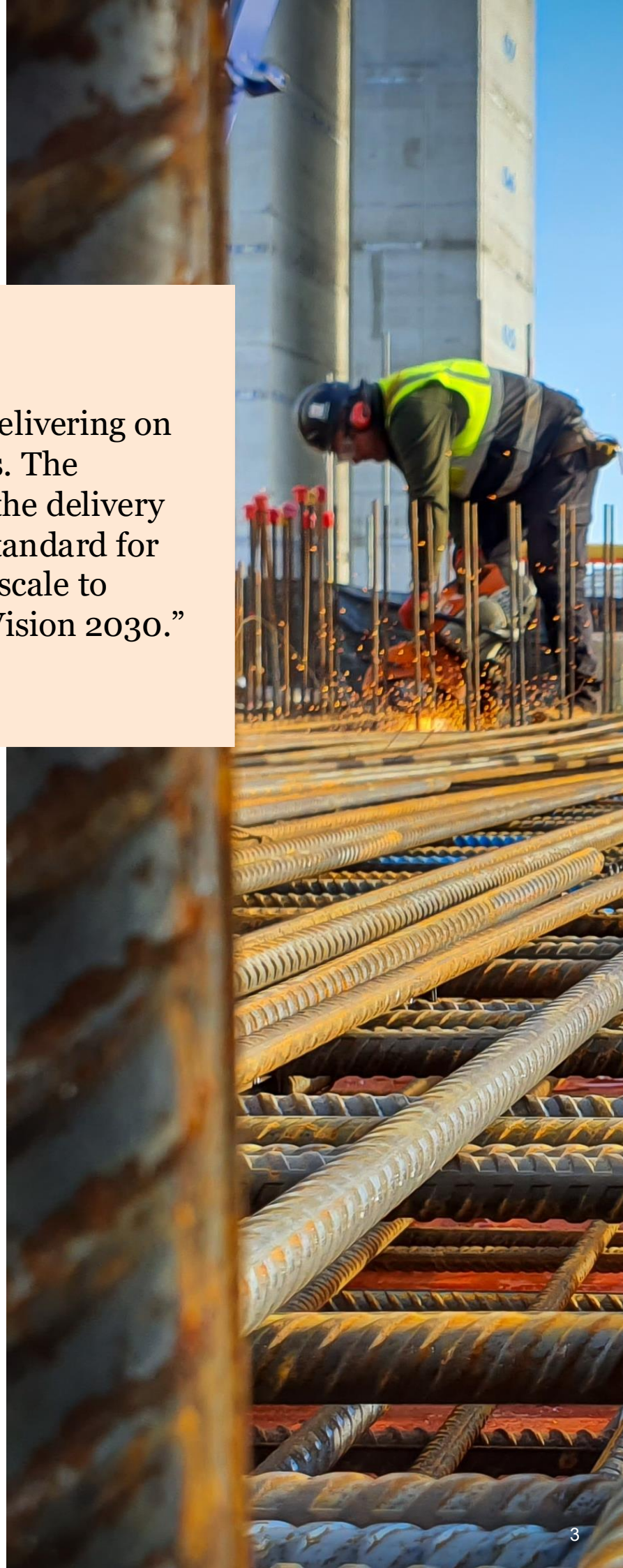
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Mandated by Vision 2030 and funded by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, development companies in the Kingdom are operating at a pace and scale unprecedented in the region. They are expected to build cities, deliver infrastructure, attract investment and demonstrate measurable progress under intense public and shareholder scrutiny.

In this environment, strategic ambition is not the differentiator. The real test is whether these organisations have the institutional capacity to translate ambition into a prioritised portfolio, clear ownership, disciplined governance and verifiable outcomes.

This challenge is not unique to Saudi Arabia. According to PMI's 2025 global research, only 50% of projects meet a modern definition of success, reinforcing the scale of the delivery gap facing large, complex organisations.¹



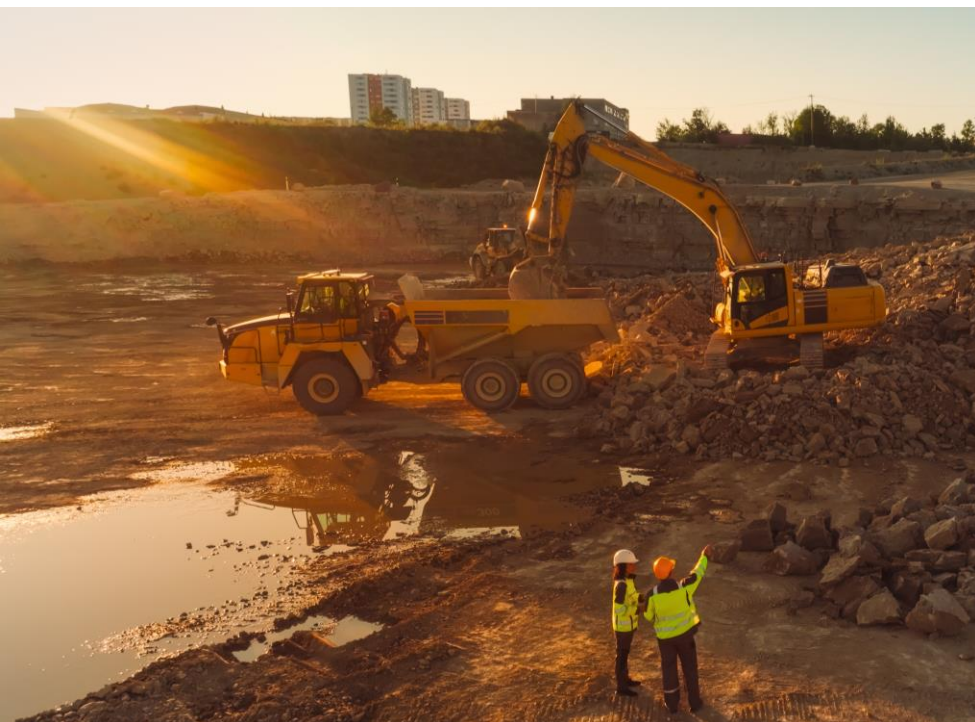
For growth-phase DevCos, delivery discipline has become a strategic capability. For leaders, the priority is to build the delivery model before portfolios become harder to control. That means making governance decision-led, standardising data before scaling technology, building resilience into the delivery rhythm and transferring capability into the organisation from day one.

This publication argues that delivery discipline is not only a project management function. It is a strategic capability that must be designed, resourced and governed with the same rigour applied to strategy itself. PwC’s DevCo Delivery Engine (see Figure 1) organises this capability across four interdependent pillars – delivery architecture, delivery mobilisation, AI-enabled delivery intelligence and resilience and business continuity. Taken together, these connect annual planning, portfolio governance, decision rights, performance data, risk management and benefits realisation.

The framework is organised around four connected questions that DevCo leaders need to answer as they move from strategy to scaled delivery.

Figure 1. PwC’s DevCo Delivery Engine framework

	Pillar	Role in the model	Leadership question
01	Delivery architecture	Translates strategy into priorities, accountabilities and governance	What are we delivering and who owns it?
02	Delivery mobilisation	Activates routines, reporting cycles, escalation and issue resolution	How does delivery move week to week?
03	AI-enabled delivery intelligence	Creates trusted visibility across progress, risk, performance and decisions	What is happening, what is at risk and where should leaders intervene?
04	Resilience and business continuity	Helps the organisation adjust delivery when conditions change	How do we maintain control under disruption?



This publication illustrates the framework through a case study drawn from PwC’s work with a large, growth-phase DevCo. Within a single fiscal year, PwC helped design and mobilise the complete connected delivery model, ensuring measurable impact: 88% average realisation across six anonymised strategic objectives including 100% on financial returns, 97% on partnerships and 96% on economic development and sustainability, with approximately 70% of corporate KPIs on track at year-end.



01

The growth-phase
test for DevCos in
the Kingdom



The growth-phase test for DevCos in the Kingdom

Saudi Arabia's development companies are being asked to deliver against some of the Kingdom's most important national priorities. Established with large mandates, significant capital commitments and high expectations from shareholders, government stakeholders, partners and the public, their role extends well beyond real estate development. They are often expected to shape new urban centres, coordinate enabling infrastructure, attract investment and create new economic platforms that support long-term growth.

This national delivery discipline is visible in Vision 2030's own reporting. In 2024, 85% of active initiatives were completed or on track, while 93% of Vision 2030 key performance indicators were achieved or on track.² For DevCos, this shows that delivery is now being judged through measurable progress, not ambition alone.

Investor attention is also concentrated in the Kingdom. [PwC Middle East's 2025 Capital Projects & Infrastructure Survey](#) found that 78% of respondents cited Saudi Arabia as a key capital projects investment destination, ahead of the United Arab Emirates at 65% and Qatar at 29%. This concentration of investor interest raises the delivery bar for DevCos: they must not only launch ambitious projects, but also demonstrate that they have the governance, delivery discipline and performance visibility needed to convert capital into measurable outcomes.

Growth-phase DevCos (see Figure 2 for DevCo maturity phases) often face a distinctive management problem. Their strategic ambition, shareholder expectations and public visibility often accelerate faster than their internal delivery model. As organisations grow, more initiatives are launched, more stakeholders become involved, dependencies multiply, and leadership requires a far clearer line of sight from strategic objectives to delivery on the ground.

This challenge is especially pronounced because DevCos often operate simultaneously as sponsor, developer, partner, manager and future operator. Governance, commercial, design, delivery and stakeholder decisions therefore need to be synchronised at a pace traditional real estate organisations were not necessarily built to manage.



93%

of Vision 2030 key performance indicators were achieved or on track



78%

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Figure 2. DevCo maturity phases

	Pillar	Main leadership question	Delivery challenge
01	Formation	What are we here to deliver?	Translating mandate into strategy
02	Growth	How do we organise delivery?	Building the Delivery Discipline Framework
03	Scale	How do we sustain control?	Managing portfolio complexity
04	Maturity	How do we keep improving?	Embedding analytics, AI and continuous improvement



The DevCo featured in this report had moved beyond formation. Its strategic direction was set, but its operating model needed to support a larger, more complex portfolio. **The next sections examine the gaps the model needed to address, the four disciplines used to close them and what changed in practice.**



02

Where delivery
breaks down

Where delivery breaks down

For growth-phase DevCos, delivery risk usually builds through smaller gaps that compound over time. Plans are approved, initiatives begin and reporting cycles are established, but the connection between strategy, delivery and leadership decision-making becomes harder to maintain as the organisation scales. The following symptoms often indicate that delivery discipline has not matured at the same pace as the portfolio (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Common delivery symptoms in growth-phase DevCos

Symptom		What it signals
No single owner accountable for enterprise delivery and performance	→	Delivery accountability is fragmented
Limited visibility across initiatives, projects, risks and dependencies	→	Leaders lack a reliable enterprise view
Departments plan and report in inconsistent formats	→	Performance cannot be compared across functions
Priorities and dependencies are not managed systematically	→	Sequencing risk builds across the portfolio
Decisions are reactive and based on incomplete information	→	Governance is not receiving decision-ready inputs
Ownership, escalation and approvals are unclear	→	Issues move too slowly or through informal routes
Low levels of initiative and target achievement relative to plans	→	Delivery routines are not translating plans into outcomes

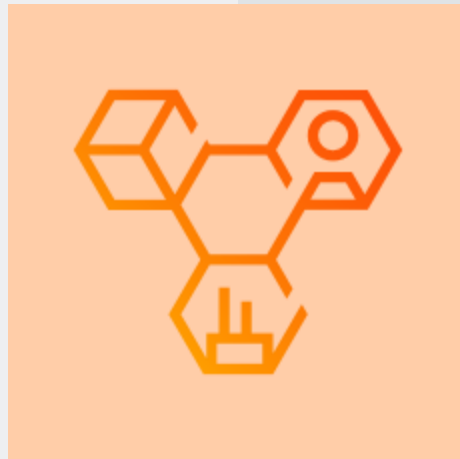
Market data points in the same direction. PwC Middle East's 2025 Capital Projects & Infrastructure Survey found that 81% of respondents experienced cost overruns in the past year, while 79% reported project delays. For DevCos managing multiple initiatives, those outcomes often begin upstream: priorities are not sequenced, dependencies are not owned, reporting is inconsistent and escalation happens too late.

The four gaps outlined below (see Figure 4) are especially important for DevCos because weak delivery discipline carries consequences beyond individual projects. Delays can affect capital allocation, stakeholder confidence, partnership momentum and progress against national priorities. At the core is a common issue: the absence of one clear system to translate priorities, coordinate delivery, monitor performance and adjust when conditions change.

Figure 4. Four delivery gaps facing growth-phase DevCos

Gap	What it looks like	Delivery implication
Translation	Strategy is not converted into sequenced initiatives with owners, milestones and measures	Activity increases without a shared view of value, sequence or accountability
Coordination	Functions move through different routines and escalation paths	Dependencies are not identified, owned or escalated early enough
Visibility	Reporting is inconsistent, manual or too activity-based	Leaders lack a trusted view of progress and risk
Sustainment	New routines depend on external support or individual effort	Delivery control weakens after mobilisation





03

The delivery framework
for growth-phase DevCos

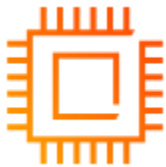


A practical way to frame the challenge is through a delivery discipline equation: strategy only creates impact when it is supported by the right delivery system. Strong ambition is not enough on its own. It needs to be connected to clear decisions, accountable owners, disciplined delivery, value tracking and organisational capability. These elements work together as a system. If one is weak, the whole system slows down.

The four pillars provide the structure needed to translate strategic ambition into effective delivery.

Pillar 1:

Delivery architecture



Pillar 2:

Delivery mobilisation



Pillar 3:

AI-enabled delivery intelligence



Pillar 4:

Resilience and business continuity



3.1 Pillar 1: Delivery architecture

Delivery architecture defines how priorities are translated, how decisions are made and how teams interact to move initiatives forward. For growth-phase DevCos, it is the foundation that turns ambition into a controlled, aligned delivery engine – one that can scale without losing momentum.

In practice, this includes:



■ **Operating model design:** Define the target operating model aligned to strategy, including structure, roles, workflows and accountability layers



■ **Enterprise governance:** Design tiered governance forums with clear mandates, escalation paths and decision rights



■ **Interaction model and forums:** Establish how teams work together through defined meeting cadences, stakeholder participation and escalation triggers



■ **Decision rights and RACI:** Define and enforce decision ownership across initiatives, so teams know who is responsible, accountable, consulted and informed



■ **Portfolio prioritisation:** Develop a consistent prioritisation framework based on strategic alignment, feasibility, capacity and dependencies



■ **Strategy translation into the annual operating plan:** Convert the mandate and strategy into clear initiatives, KPIs, milestones, owners, dependencies and resource plans

These elements give leaders a common basis for deciding what matters most, what needs to happen first, where dependencies sit and which decisions require governance attention.

Practical components of this pillar include:

Annual operating plan linked to strategic objectives	Portfolio prioritisation logic	Initiative charters and milestone definitions
Defined ownership across functions	Decision rights and escalation routes	Governance forums with clear mandates, inputs and outputs

3.2 Pillar 2: Delivery mobilisation

If architecture defines the model, mobilisation makes it work. It activates the delivery system through a clear delivery cadence: the regular cycle of planning, reporting, governance, escalation, decision-making and follow-up that keeps initiatives moving week-to-week. For growth-phase DevCos, this cadence makes dependencies visible, issues easier to resolve and leadership intervention more timely.

In practice, this includes:



■ **Corporate EPMO activation:** Establish the Enterprise PMO as the central coordination hub for annual operating plan execution, dependency management and delivery oversight



■ **Integrated Master Schedule (IMS) and baseline control:** Create a corporate-level delivery schedule that maps dependencies, locks baselines and manages version control



■ **Execution cadence:** Set structured reporting cycles – bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual – with clear escalation triggers



■ **Issue resolution and change control:** Define formal processes to identify, categorise, escalate and resolve issues, with controlled management of changes



■ **Cross-functional alignment:** Coordinate interdependencies through integrated planning, shared reporting and active dependency management



■ **Benefits realisation:** Track delivery against intended outcomes by linking progress to KPIs, financial performance and strategic objectives

These mechanisms turn the operating model into a live delivery rhythm – one that keeps teams aligned, surfaces risks early and enables faster action when plans shift.

Practical components of this pillar include:

EPMO mobilisation	Integrated delivery calendar	Reporting cycles and escalation triggers	Risk, issue and change-control processes
Dependency tracking	Benefits realisation and outcome monitoring	Follow-up discipline after governance decisions	

3.3 Pillar 3: AI-enabled delivery intelligence

AI and analytics can strengthen delivery discipline, but only when the data underneath is trusted. For DevCos, the priority is to standardise definitions, data ownership and reporting routines before scaling dashboards or predictive tools.

The order is deliberate: standardise first, automate second, predict third.

In practice, this includes:



■ **Performance dashboards:** Standardised dashboards that consolidate KPIs, progress against plan and performance trends.



■ **Data and reporting foundations:** Consistent KPI definitions, data governance protocols and integrated data sources.



■ **Automated reporting:** Tools that automate data collection, consolidation and status reporting.



■ **Predictive analytics:** AI and analytics that identify trends, forecast risks and anticipate delivery issues.



■ **Risk pattern detection:** AI models that cluster recurring risks, dependencies and failure points.



■ **Scenario modelling:** Rapid testing of timeline shifts, resource changes and prioritisation trade-offs.

Practical components of this pillar include:

Standardised KPI and milestone definitions	Data ownership and reporting compliance	Programme management information systems	Dashboards linked to governance forums
Risk and issue trend analysis	Scenario modelling	AI-supported reporting and decision preparation	

3.4 Pillar 4: Resilience and business continuity

Delivery models are tested when conditions change. For DevCos, disruption can come from funding shifts, supply chain pressure, contractor performance, permitting delays, stakeholder decisions, infrastructure dependencies, market movement or climate-related risks. A model that only works in stable conditions is not enough. Leaders need the ability to anticipate risk, test scenarios and reconfigure delivery without losing control of the portfolio.

In practice, this includes:

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Portfolio risk tower: Create a central view of portfolio risks, exposure levels, mitigation actions and ownership.
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Scenario planning: Test disruption scenarios and assess their impact on timelines, priorities, dependencies and resources.
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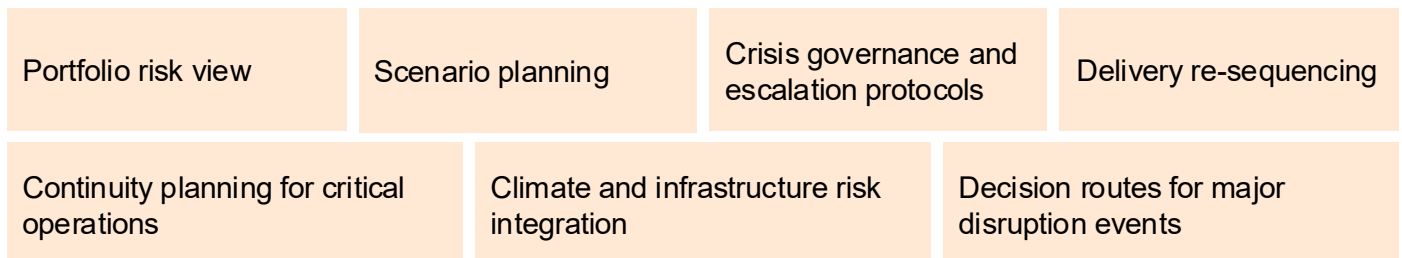
Crisis governance: Define crisis structures, escalation protocols and decision authority so leaders can act quickly when disruption occurs.
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Delivery re-sequencing: Adjust project sequencing dynamically when critical paths shift or disruption affects delivery priorities.
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Service continuity: Build continuity plans for critical operations, infrastructure and delivery functions.
- 

Climate resilience: Integrate climate-related risks into planning, design and delivery decisions, supported by practical adaptation measures.

Practical components of this pillar include:



The next section shows how this model was applied in practice with an anonymised DevCo. 



04

Applying the PwC DevCo
Delivery Engine in a
development company
in Saudi Arabia

Applying the PwC DevCo Delivery Engine in a development company in Saudi Arabia

The DevCo featured in this report had moved beyond formation. Its strategic direction was set, leadership was in place and the organisation was managing a growing portfolio. But planning, governance, reporting and escalation were not yet operating as one connected system.

PwC worked with the DevCo to design and mobilise a delivery discipline model across planning, governance, programme management, performance monitoring and capability transfer. The work did not create another strategy. It helped the organisation translate its existing strategy into a more controlled operating rhythm.



The work spanned seven connected workstreams. Four of them shaped the core delivery backbone: enterprise programme management office activation, the annual operating plan, performance management and governance and reporting.

Three reinforced it: stakeholder management, to coordinate the DevCo's growing set of government, partner and community relationships; ESG integration, to embed sustainability governance and reporting into the operating model; and organisational excellence and innovation, to build a pipeline for continuous improvement.

These workstreams ensured the delivery model addressed not only how initiatives were planned and tracked, but how the organisation engaged stakeholders, met sustainability commitments and improved over time (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. From fragmented delivery to governed portfolio performance

Delivery challenge before mobilisation	Framework area	What PwC helped build	What changed
<p>01 Strategic priorities not consistently translated into delivery</p>	<p>Delivery architecture</p>	<p>Annual operating plan, initiative charters and milestone logic</p>	<p>Clearer portfolio of active initiatives linked to strategic objectives</p>
<p>02 Inconsistent planning and reporting across departments</p>	<p>Delivery mobilisation</p>	<p>Common routines, reporting cycles and integrated delivery calendar</p>	<p>More comparable performance view across functions</p>
<p>03 Informal escalation and unclear decision routes</p>	<p>Delivery mobilisation</p>	<p>Governance forums, escalation paths and decision rights</p>	<p>More structured issue resolution and faster leadership intervention</p>
<p>04 Fragmented visibility of progress and risk</p>	<p>AI-enabled delivery intelligence</p>	<p>Programme management information system, dashboards and standardised reporting</p>	<p>Clearer leadership view of priorities, risks, performance and outcomes</p>
<p>05 Limited ability to adjust when dependencies shifted</p>	<p>Resilience and business continuity</p>	<p>Risk, issue, change-control and resequencing routines</p>	<p>Stronger ability to manage delivery impacts before they escalated</p>
<p>06 Dependence on mobilisation support</p>	<p>Cross-cutting sustainment</p>	<p>Playbooks, training and progressive handover</p>	<p>Stronger client ownership of the delivery model</p>

4.1 Translating strategy into the annual operating plan

The priority was to convert strategic objectives into an annual operating plan. This meant defining initiatives, milestones, accountable owners, dependencies, KPIs and reporting requirements.

The annual operating plan gave the DevCo a clearer line of sight between its mandate, portfolio and day-to-day delivery. Leaders could see which strategic priorities had become active initiatives, where sequencing shaped delivery and which parts of the organisation were accountable for progress.



4.2 Mobilising governance and delivery routines

PwC then supported the mobilisation of the routines needed to manage delivery. This included programme management processes, reporting cycles, governance forums, risk and issue management, change control and escalation routes.



The aim was to make governance more decision-led. Forums were given clearer mandates, inputs, outputs and attendance requirements. Reporting was linked to the issues leaders needed to resolve, not just the activities teams wanted to describe. This helped move the organisation away from informal coordination and towards a more repeatable delivery rhythm.

4.3 Creating enterprise performance visibility

A third area of work focused on giving leadership a more reliable view of portfolio performance. Programme management information systems, dashboards and standardised reporting helped consolidate information on initiatives, milestones, KPIs, risks, issues and transformation outcomes.

This shifted monitoring from fragmented updates towards a more consistent enterprise view. It also created the basis for future digital, analytics and AI use cases by establishing the data discipline needed for insight-led oversight.





4.4 Embedding capability and ownership

The final area was capability transfer. The model needed to be run by the organisation, not remain dependent on mobilisation support.

PwC helped codify routines, define roles, support training, establish playbooks and transfer ownership progressively into the business. This included clarifying who owned reporting inputs, who maintained data quality, who prepared decision materials and who followed up on escalations.

To sustain the model, capability transfer needed to be role-based and reinforced through day-to-day routines. This included practical coaching for the teams responsible for reporting and delivery management, named departmental owners for data quality, schedule updates and follow-up, and visible leadership use of the governance forums and dashboards. The aim was to make the model part of how the organisation worked, not a set of documents handed over at the end.



4.5 What changed

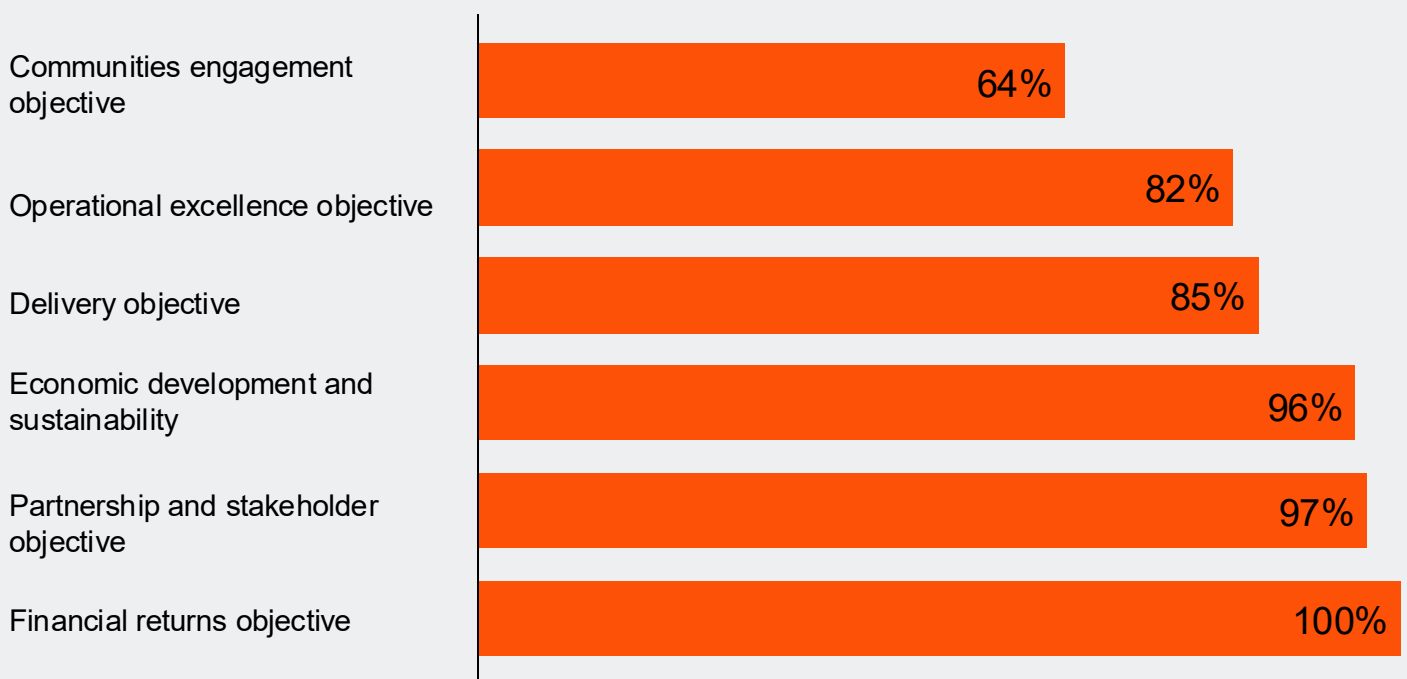
Within 12 months, the DevCo had moved from fragmented follow-up to a more structured delivery rhythm. Strategic objectives had been converted into active initiatives. Departments were reporting through more consistent routines. Leadership had a clearer view of priorities, risks and performance and escalation routes were more explicit.

The DevCo achieved 88% average realisation across six anonymised strategic objectives (see Figure 6), including:



Figure 6. Case impact at a glance

Selected anonymised strategy-to-delivery outcomes from the DevCo's first 12 months following mobilisation of the delivery discipline model





05

The leadership agenda
for DevCo CEOs

The leadership agenda for DevCo CEOs

For DevCo CEOs, delivery discipline now sits at the centre of the growth agenda. The four-pillar model described earlier requires deliberate choices about architecture, mobilisation, intelligence and resilience. These choices are easier to make early than to retrofit later, especially once portfolios have expanded, reporting routines have diverged and stakeholder dependencies have become harder to control.

Five priorities should guide CEO action:

5.1 Build the delivery model now, not later

The cost of waiting is high. Once initiatives have multiplied, reporting routines have diverged and escalation depends on personal relationships, retrofitting governance is slow and disruptive. For DevCos, sequencing affects infrastructure readiness, partner commitments, procurement timelines, asset handover and visible progress against Vision 2030 commitments. The leadership move is to build the model in the growth phase, not when complexity has already exposed its absence.

5.2 Make governance decide, not discuss

Governance should move decisions, not organise discussion. Every forum needs a defined purpose, the right participants, reliable inputs and a clear route from discussion to action. Where this discipline is missing, meetings multiply while unresolved issues continue to slow delivery.

CEOs should audit their forum landscape against a simple test: which forums have made which decisions in the last quarter?

5.3 Own data standards from the top

Dashboards and reporting tools only create value when the underlying data is consistent and trusted. Common definitions for initiatives, milestones, KPIs, risks, issues and status reporting are a leadership mandate, not a back-office task.

This is also the precondition for digital, analytics and AI. Predictive insight depends on reliable source data, reporting discipline and clear ownership. Without those foundations, technology makes inconsistent information more visible without making it more useful.

5.4 Keep the enterprise programme management office close to decisions

The EPMO should not be reduced to report collection. Its value lies in helping leadership understand delivery performance, surface risks, manage dependencies, test scenarios and follow through on decisions.

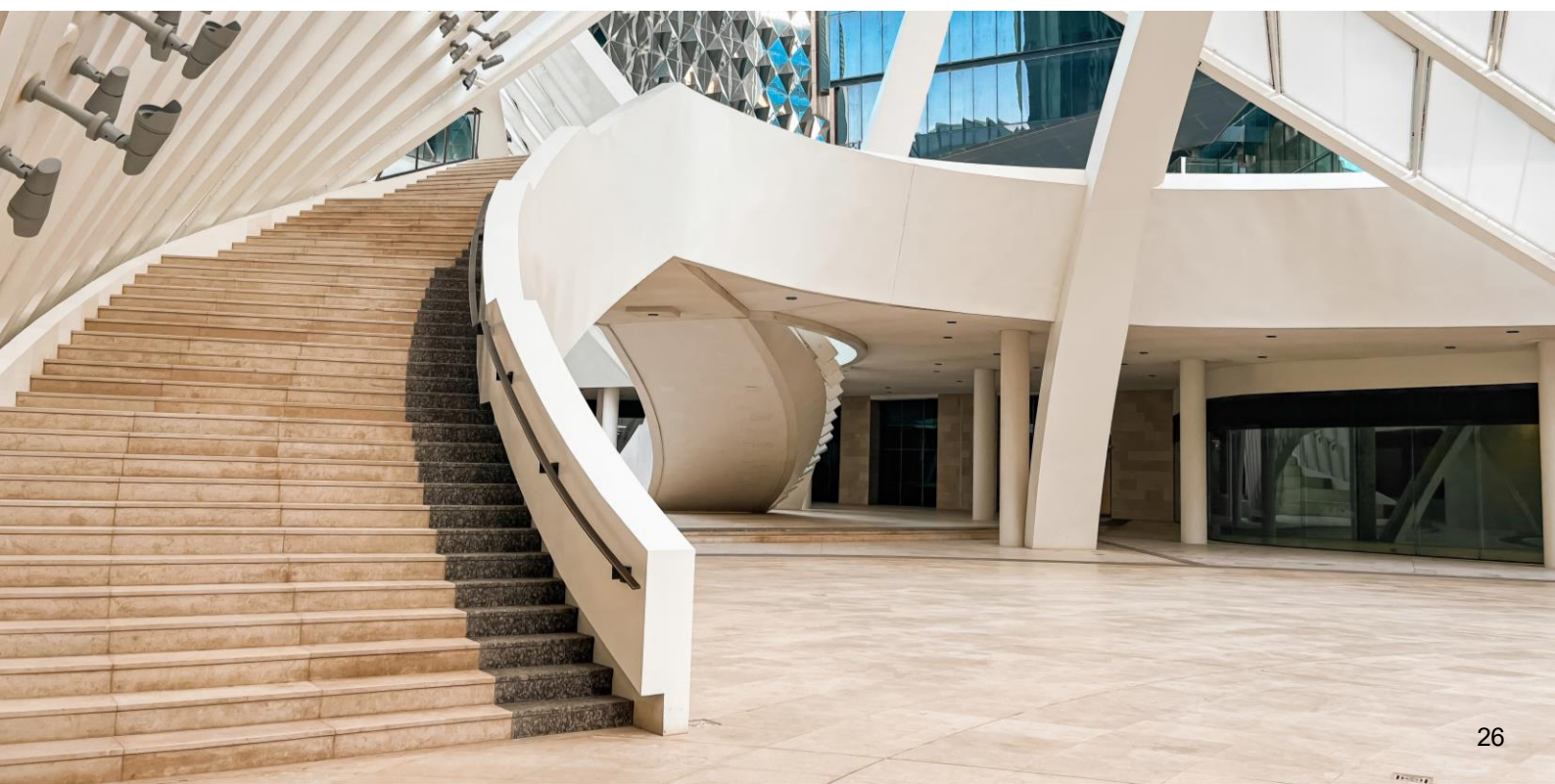
Research by PwC Middle East and PMI reinforces this point. Transformation offices are 2.5 times more likely to achieve better outcomes when they are properly mandated and connected to enterprise decision-making.³ For DevCos, this means the EPMO needs authority, proximity to leadership and a clear role in turning delivery insight into action.

For major development platforms, decisions on infrastructure, procurement, design, investment, stakeholder management and operations rarely sit within one function. The EPMO is one of the few units positioned to see those dependencies together. That requires a mandate linked to enterprise priorities, direct connection to governance forums and a reporting line close to the CEO and executive committee.

5.5 Transfer capability from day one

A delivery model only lasts when the organisation can run it itself. From the start, DevCos should define who owns each routine, who maintains the data, who prepares decision materials, who follows up on escalations and who adjusts delivery plans when conditions change.

Training, playbooks, role ownership and progressive handover should be designed into the work, not added at the end. For DevCos in the Kingdom, this is also a Saudisation and knowledge-retention question. Capability transfer is what ensures delivery discipline is institutional rather than dependent on individuals or external support.



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Contact

For more information about PwC’s DevCo Delivery Engine services, or to discuss how we can support your organisation’s transformation priorities, please contact:

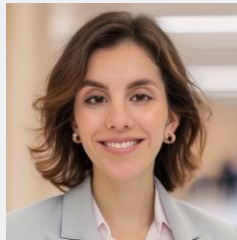


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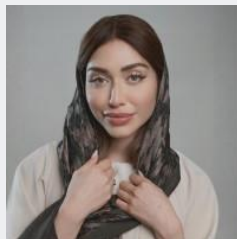
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