

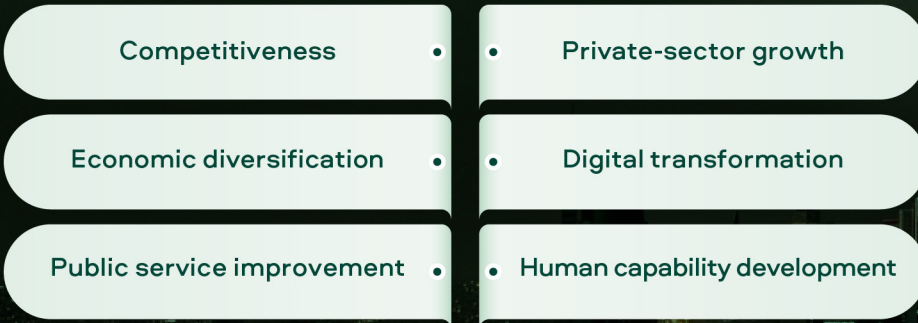


BEYOND STRATEGY

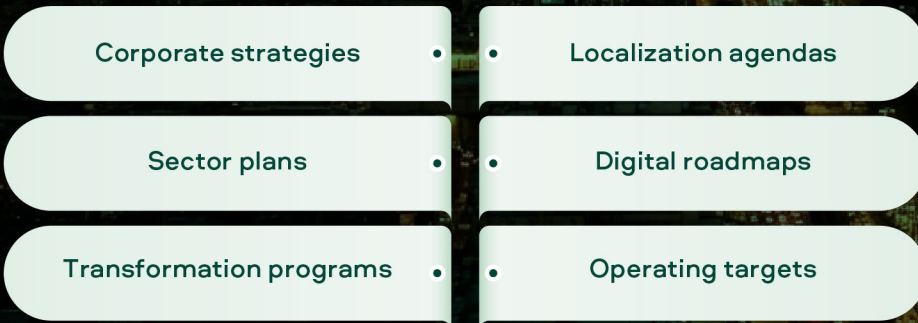
Building Implementation Excellence
for Saudi Organizations

Saudi Arabia's transformation journey has created an environment where strategic clarity is no longer the primary challenge. Through Vision 2030, the Kingdom has established a clear national direction for economic diversification, competitiveness, public-sector modernization, private-sector growth, human capital development, and digital transformation.

Vision 2030 has provided a national direction for:



While organizations across the Kingdom have translated this broader direction into:



As a result, many organizations already know where they need to go.

|| The more pressing question is whether they have the implementation capabilities required to get there.

For organizations, the value of strategy will increasingly be judged by its ability to influence day-to-day operations, resource allocation, workflow design, leadership behaviour, performance management, and measurable outcomes. Yet globally, execution remains one of the most persistent organizational challenges. Globally, 67% of well-formulated strategies are estimated to fail because of poor execution¹, showing that the gap often appears after direction has been agreed. In practice, this gap usually sits between the strategic document and the operating reality: unclear responsibilities, inconsistent processes, disconnected digital systems, and governance that tracks activity without resolving delivery barriers.

Globally,

67%

of well-formulated strategies are estimated to fail because of poor execution¹.

For Saudi organizations operating in an increasingly competitive and rapidly evolving environment, the next source of advantage will not come from strategy alone. It will come from the ability to translate strategic direction into operational discipline.

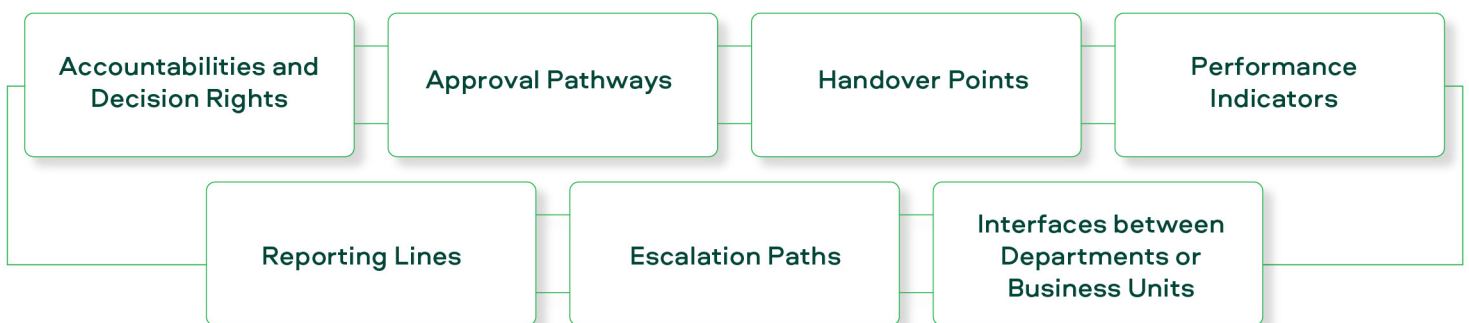
I.

Operational Standardization

Turning Strategic Direction into Consistent Performance

A. From Strategic Intent to Operating Model

Implementation begins when strategic priorities are translated into an operating model that defines how work should be delivered across the organization. This includes:



While strategy defines what an organization aims to achieve, the operating model determines how those objectives are translated into day-to-day execution. It provides the structure through which decisions are made, resources are allocated, performance is managed, and accountability is maintained.

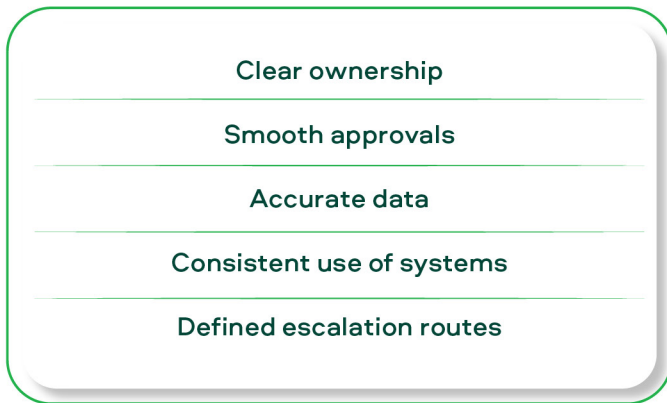
As organizations expand in response to Vision 2030 opportunities, many are managing larger portfolios, wider geographic footprints, and more diverse stakeholder groups. Without this layer, strategy remains vulnerable to individual interpretation, and execution becomes inconsistent across teams, branches, regions, or functions.

2 ¹ Executives Fail to Execute Strategy Because They're Too Internally Focused – Harvard Business Review

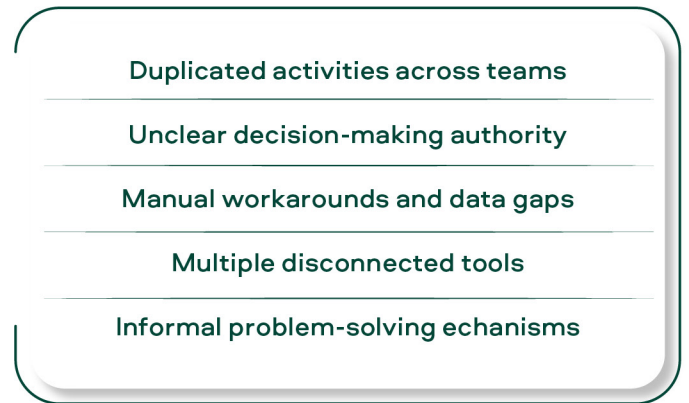
B. Closing the Gap Between Designed Processes and Operational Reality

One of the most common implementation challenges arises when the processes designed by leadership differ from the way work is actually performed on the ground.

The Designed Process Assumes:



Operational Reality May Include:



Operational standardization therefore requires organizations to move closer to delivery reality. **Process mapping, operational audits, role clarification, workflow diagnostics, and bottleneck analysis** help reveal whether the designed model is being applied as intended, where execution is slowed, where accountability is diluted, and where the model needs adjustment.

C. Protecting Financial and Operational Health

When decision rights, workflows, and accountability structures are unclear, execution often becomes costly and difficult to control. Organizations may experience:



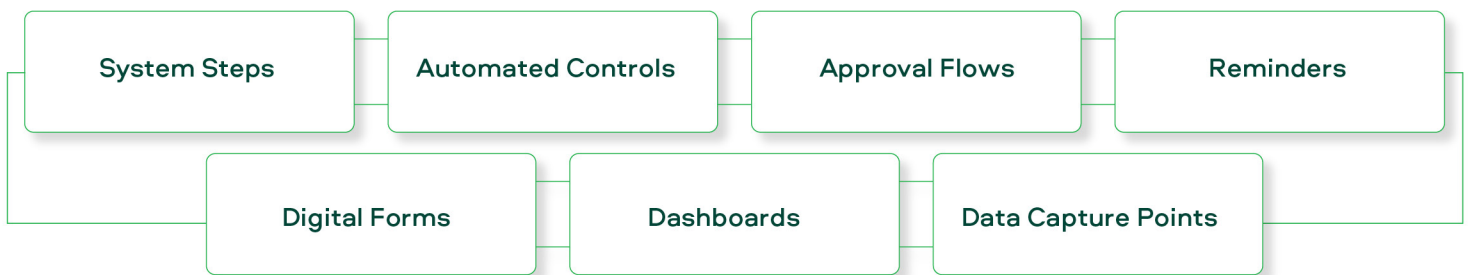
This is particularly important in sectors supporting Vision 2030, where organizations are expected to deliver ambitious growth while maintaining efficiency, governance, and financial discipline. As Saudi organizations scale across regions, programs, and partnerships, the ability to grow without losing operational control becomes a central implementation capability.

II. Execution Integration

Turning Design into Delivery

A. Translating Processes into Everyday Practice

Implementation becomes stronger when processes are embedded into the tools, systems, and workflows employees use every day. Policies and guidelines define the intended way of working, but adoption depends on translating them into practical execution mechanisms, such as:



A documented process tells people what should happen, while an embedded workflow helps ensure that it happens consistently. When processes remain separate from daily work, employees may rely on informal shortcuts to keep tasks moving, creating inconsistency across teams and weakening leadership visibility over performance.

Government platforms such as Absher, Nafath, Qiwa, Etimad, and FASAH show how embedded workflows can simplify complex processes, standardize user journeys, improve transparency, and create reliable data for decision-making.



B. Leveraging Saudi Arabia's Digital Transformation as an Execution Enabler

Saudi Arabia's digital maturity provides an important foundation for this shift. **The Kingdom ranked 4th globally in the 2024 UN digital services index, 1st regionally, 2nd among G20 countries, and advanced 25 places in the UN E-Government Development Index.**

These indicators reflect an environment where **digital service expectations, data-enabled workflows, and platform-based delivery** are becoming part of how organizations are expected to function.

As businesses and government entities expand across regions, service lines, customer segments, projects, and delivery channels, the number of operational dependencies increases. Without structured workflows, these dependencies can create delays, inconsistencies, and limited visibility over performance.



III.

Building Institutional Capability

Sustaining Implementation Through People

A. Developing the Workforce Behind Execution

Implementation cannot be sustained by processes and systems alone. Organizations need people who:



This places **talent assessment, capability-building, succession planning, and second-line leadership development** at the centre of implementation.

Saudi Arabia’s human capability agenda reinforces this direction. The **Human Capability Development** Program focuses on matching educational outcomes to labour market needs, fostering innovation, and developing and upgrading skills, while preparing youth for the future local and global labour market.



Localization becomes more sustainable when it is treated as capability-building, **preparing national workforce for critical roles, decision-making responsibilities, operational ownership, and leadership succession.** Sustainable localization requires structured pathways that connect roles, skills, performance, mentoring, knowledge transfer, and progression.

B. Building Continuity Through Leadership Depth

Implementation also depends on continuity. While senior leaders establish strategic direction, the long-term success of a transformation effort often depends on whether execution capability becomes embedded throughout the organization.

This makes second-line leadership particularly important. Middle managers, department heads, branch managers, project leaders, and operational supervisors play a critical role in translating strategic priorities into daily actions.



When a strong second line of leadership is in place, implementation becomes part of the organization's own management capability rather than a temporary transformation effort.



IV.

Outcome-Oriented Governance

Sustaining Execution Beyond Launch

A. Moving from Initiative Tracking to Delivery Management

As organizations move from strategy to implementation, governance needs to

Traditional Oversight Focus

- Whether initiatives have started
- Whether milestones have been reported
- Whether activities have been completed
- Whether project plans are on track
- Whether reports have been submitted

Delivery Management Focus

- Whether implementation is progressing as intended
- Where execution is being delayed or blocked
- Which decisions require escalation
- Which dependencies are unresolved
- Whether the expected outcomes are being achieved

Completion of activities does not necessarily indicate implementation success:

- A new process may be approved without being adopted
- A digital system may go live without improving productivity
- A new structure may be announced without clarifying accountability

Delivery governance should therefore measure adoption, behavioural change, operational performance, and impact, rather than relying only on project completion.

B. Creating Feedback Loops Between Leadership and Operations

Strong implementation requires a **continuous feedback loop** between leadership decisions and operational reality. Front-line issues need a route to decision-makers, while leadership decisions need to be translated into clear actions, owners, timelines, workflows, and measures. Without this loop, unresolved operational constraints can accumulate beneath the surface.

In Saudi Arabia's current environment, many organizations are operating across **more stakeholders, larger mandates, faster growth cycles, and more complex delivery expectations**. Governance therefore needs to remain sufficiently connected to implementation to identify emerging constraints, remove barriers quickly, and ensure that strategic priorities continue to translate into operational results.



C. Measuring Success Through Outcomes

Ultimately, implementation should be judged by the value it creates rather than the activities completed during the transformation journey. Mature governance models focus on outcomes and ask whether implementation has improved:

Operational Outcomes



This is where implementation becomes a management discipline rather than a project-management exercise. Governance shifts from tracking activity to measuring impact.

The Next Competitive Advantage Is Implementation Maturity

Saudi Arabia's transformation has created unprecedented opportunities for organizations across both the public and private sectors. While strategic direction is increasingly clear, the ability to execute consistently remains the defining challenge.

The organizations that will lead in the next phase of the Kingdom's development will be those that can translate ambition into action, strategy into operations, and plans into measurable outcomes. They will build operating models that scale, workflows that drive adoption, capabilities that sustain performance, and governance that remains focused on results.

As Vision 2030 enters its final stretch, implementation maturity is becoming more than an operational capability—it is emerging as a strategic advantage.



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