



Shape the future
with confidence

Visionary project management office (PMO) for sustainable energy initiative excellence



The better the question.
The better the answer.
The better the world works.

Middle East
Green Initiative




Forward7
Clean Cooking

OSP
برنامج استدامة الطلب على البترول
Oil Sustainability Program





How a high-impact PMO can drive efficiency and innovation in the energy sector



The Middle East Green Initiative (MGI) is evolving its initiative, Forward7, previously known as “Clean Fuel Solutions for Cooking” initiative, into a comprehensive initiative. This initiative aims to deliver a range of clean fuel solutions for cooking, setting a new benchmark in project management excellence. To achieve this, a project management office (PMO) has been established for the Forward7, with the goals of optimizing execution, enhancing governance and fostering innovation.

■ The better the question

How can an optimized project management ecosystem support industry excellence?

What started as a single solution opportunity focused on liquid petroleum gas (LPG) for clean cooking has evolved into a massive multipurpose initiative to provide clean cooking access to millions globally. It has evolved from an opportunity within the Oil Sustainability Program (OSP) to a core innovator in the Middle East Green Initiative (MGI). The MGI's aim is to combat climate change through collaboration, knowledge exchange and investments in the region.

During the first MGI summit, the Forward7 initiative was officially launched, with the objective of delivering clean cooking solutions, such as LPG, solar and biogas to communities in dire need. The need to establish a governmental Project Implementation Unit (PIU) is necessary to provide a dedicated approach to support this vision.

Saudi Arabia has committed 15% of the required funding to provide clean cooking kits to millions of people, so that every family can cook healthy.

“

Let's not forget that a third of the world's population is suffering from energy poverty. I am approaching so many companies to have that reality check and, more importantly, have that moral commitment. We cannot leave the 2.2 billion people behind.

His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud, Minister of Energy

"Saudi energy minister signs 5 MoUs with African countries in sustainability push," *Arab News website*, arabnews.com/node/2406106/amp, 9 November 2023.

In response, the MGI established a specialized PIU focused on the Forward7 initiative and identified a critical management requirement: the development of an advanced, structured, realistic and scalable Project Management Office (PMO). This PMO was essential to accommodate the expanding scope of work and to fulfill the MGI's objectives. The primary aim was to facilitate strategic alignment and orchestrate stakeholders' management. Additionally, it aimed to drive and standardize project lifecycle processes and enhance the capabilities of project managers across the initiative. This was done while accommodating the different needs and responsibilities of each community.

■ The better the answer

Transforming the PMO to be a visionary enabler

By leveraging comprehensive assessments, advanced operating models, data analytics and cross-functional collaboration, Forward7 envisioned a PMO that would enhance efficiency. This PMO would also foster a culture of continuous improvement.

To navigate this transformation, Forward7 faced several challenges that required a strategic solution.



The solution

To tackle these challenges, Forward7 and EY teams formed a collaborate team to create a best fit PMO through a strategic three-phase approach. The first phase, “**laying the foundation,**” involved a thorough assessment of the current state. This included an in-depth analysis of existing project management processes and engagement strategies as well as an interactive analysis of Forward7’s internal and external stakeholders. This phase also evaluated project management maturity and pinpointed key areas for improvement, culminating in the development of a broad PMO plan document that outlined the transformation roadmap.

Understanding Forward7 landscape required a deep dive into the work environment.

A five-step tailored approach has been followed to conduct the current state assessment (CSA) of Forward7 PMO.

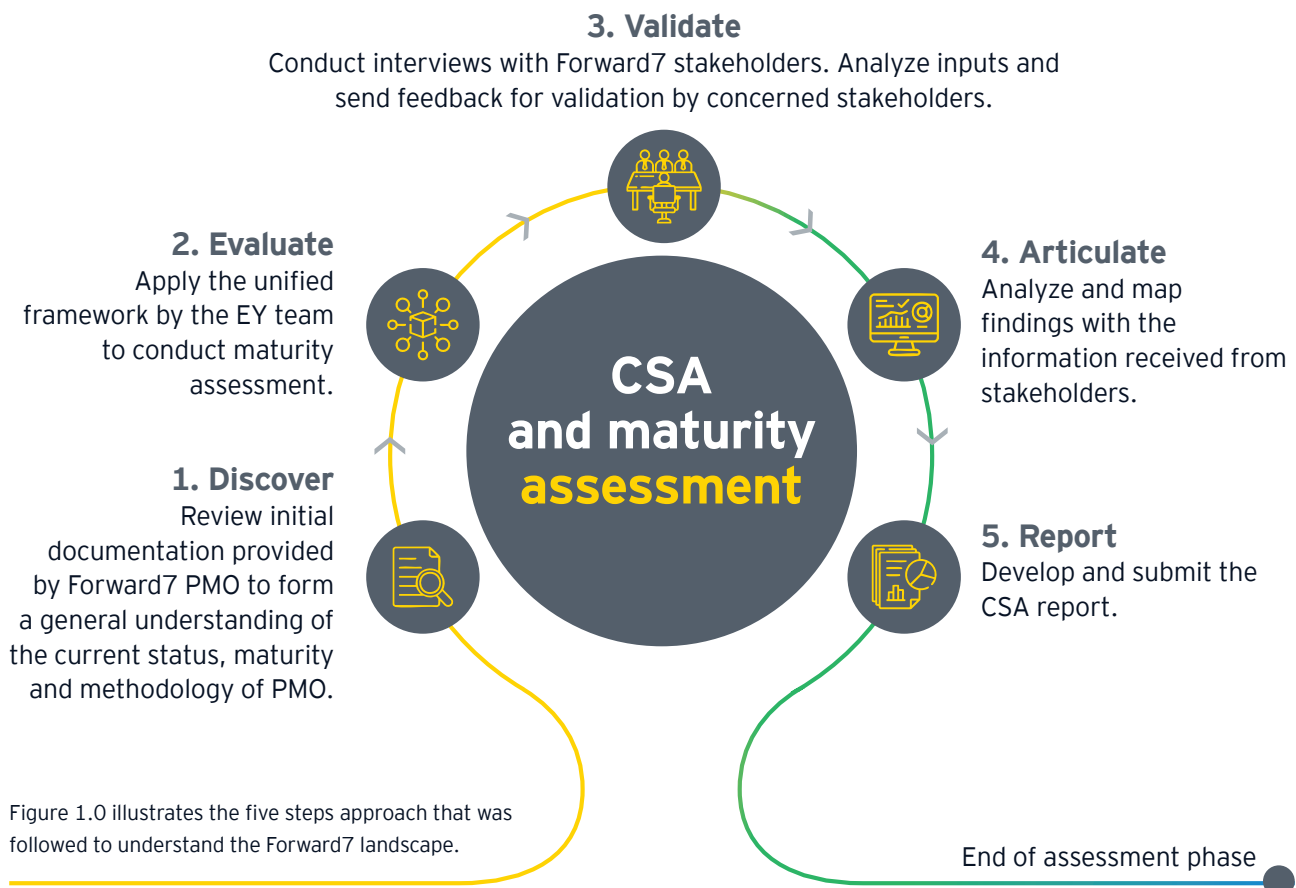


Figure 1.0 illustrates the five steps approach that was followed to understand the Forward7 landscape.



The solution

In the second phase, “**designing the future**,” which was the most challenging phase, the collaborate team focused on building the PMO target operating model (TOM) to define the structure, governance and processes. An assessment was conducted for project managers, to evaluate their competencies and identify skill gaps. This led to the creation of a structured development plan aimed at upskilling project managers. Additionally, the PMO handbook was designed for Forward7 as a reference for leading practices and methodologies, while the Forward7 dashboard was built for real-time tracking and project performance analytics. A distinctive dashboard that is tailored to Forward7 helps enable the Forward7 team to present complex project details, challenges and actions to leadership in a clear and simplified manner. This tool provides 24/7 access to critical information, improving efficiency during leadership meetings. Additionally, the dashboard narrates the complete story of any project from start to finish, including challenges, actions taken, and changes made, facilitating informed decision-making at all levels.

Many hours, days and months have been dedicated to gather data from all projects. This effort enabled Forward7 and EY teams to establish clear project cycles, which highlighted areas for improvement in project implementation and ultimately facilitated the expansion of Forward7 scope, thereby benefiting the energy sector. This achievement was made possible by the unwavering commitment of both the Forward7 and EY teams, who recognized the importance of data.

The design of the operating model should answer four key questions

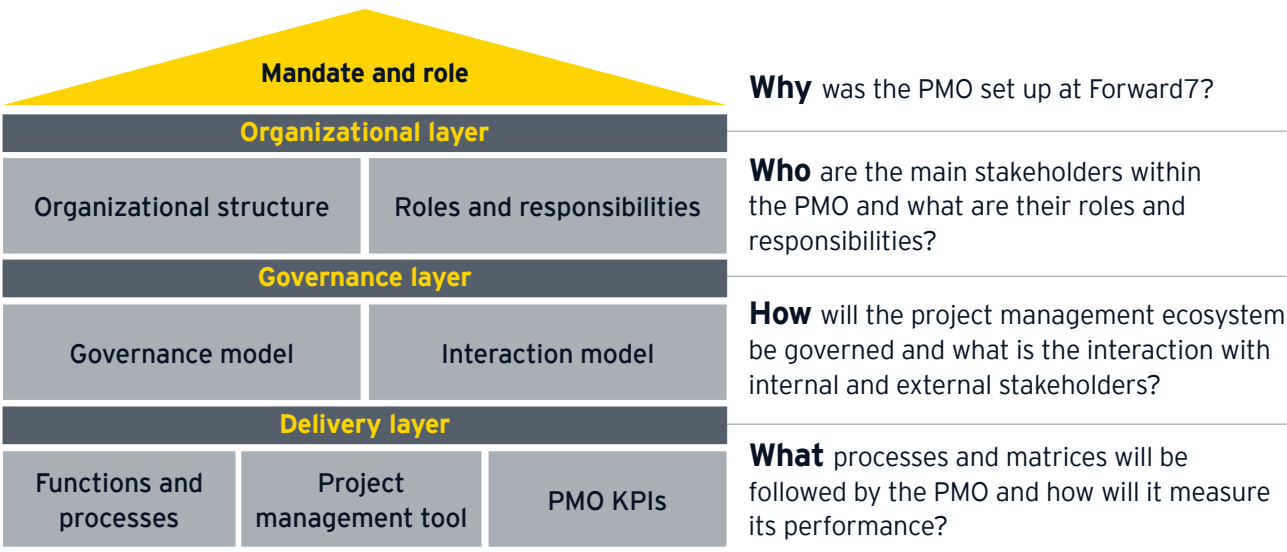


Figure 1.1 shows the PMO target operating model key layers.



The solution

Finally, in the “**Sustaining excellence**” phase, progress tracking reports were introduced to measure the success of the transformation. A continuous improvement plan was developed to drive ongoing enhancements. A PMO readiness assessment was conducted to help enable long-term sustainability. Along with this, a lessons learned report was compiled to document leading practices and future recommendations. To continuously refine project execution strategies, a data-driven insights engine was established. This helped the Forward7 remain on a path of excellence.

The collaborative framework for collecting team updates, developed by Forward7 and EY teams, has transformed the dynamics of ownership among project managers. It has also improved oversight for the PMO lead, addressing previous challenges. This structure has helped Forward7 to achieve ongoing enhancements and maturity, culminating in the successful creation of a clear and measurable business plan for 2025 and 2026.

“

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s Forward7 initiative — formerly known as the Clean Fuel Solutions for Cooking initiative — has partnered with Pune-based Air Products, a world-leading industrial gases company, and Sistema.bio, a leading social enterprise specializing in modern biogas technology, to launch a project providing subsidized biodigesters to small farm owners in Begusarai, Bihar.

The Hindu BusinessLine

“Saudi Arabia’s Forward7 initiative launches biogas project in Begusarai,” *businessline website*, [thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/saudi-arabias-forward7-initiative-launches-biogas-project-in-begusarai/article69376623.ece](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/saudi-arabias-forward7-initiative-launches-biogas-project-in-begusarai/article69376623.ece), 26 March 2025.

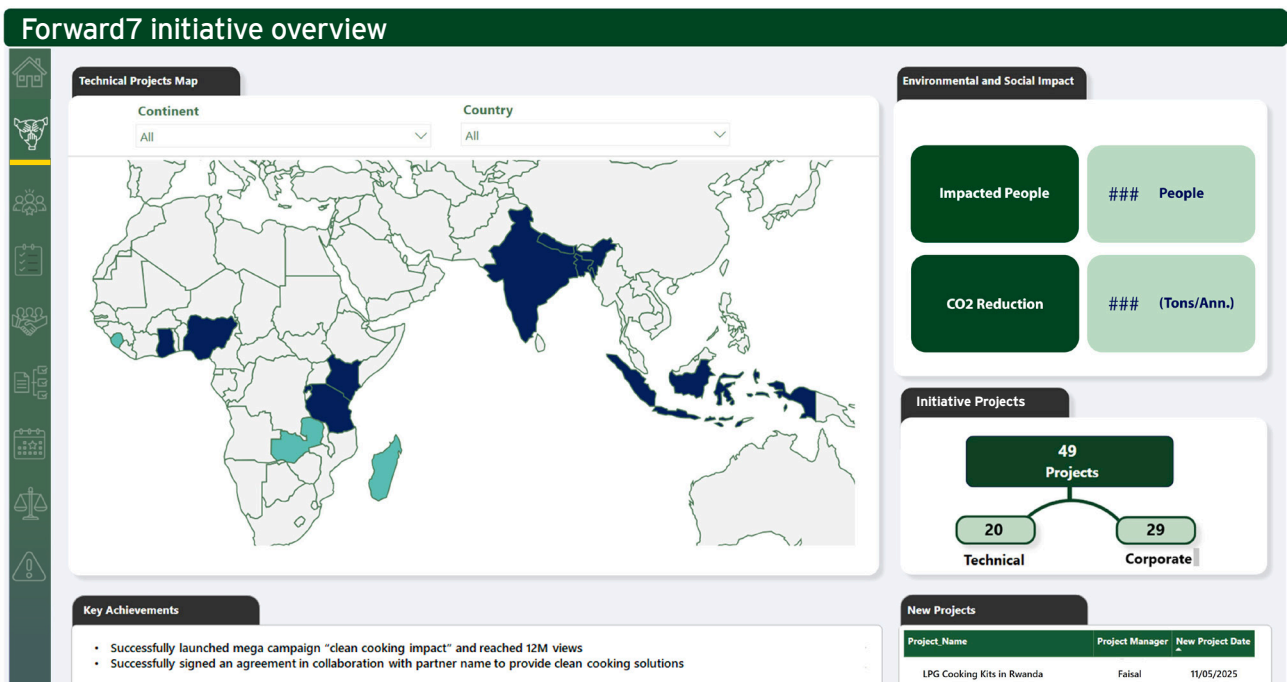


Figure 1.2 presents the Forward7 initiative overview screen

■ The better the world works

Shaping the future: PMO transformation inspires energy sector excellence

The establishment of Forward7's PMO catalyzed a series of transformative outcomes that significantly enhanced **operational effectiveness** and **strategic alignment**.

Firstly, the initiative led to increased efficiency by implementing standardized processes that effectively eliminated redundancies and streamlined operations across various teams. This standardization not only optimized resource allocation but also facilitated a more cohesive workflow, allowing for quicker project turnaround times and improved overall productivity.

Secondly, the PMO fostered enhanced collaboration among stakeholders by establishing structured governance frameworks and communication protocols. This alignment among diverse teams enabled all parties to stay on the same page. This helped minimize misunderstandings and promote a culture of teamwork and shared objectives.

Moreover, the initiative empowered the workforce through targeted training programs designed to upskill project managers. By elevating their competencies and project execution capabilities, Forward7 positioned its leaders to drive projects with greater confidence and effectiveness, ultimately leading to higher quality outcomes.

In addition, the integration of data-driven decision-making practices was a significant advancement. The deployment of real-time dashboards provided the Forward7 team with actionable insights and enhanced transparency. This enabled informed decision-making that is responsive to the dynamic project landscape.





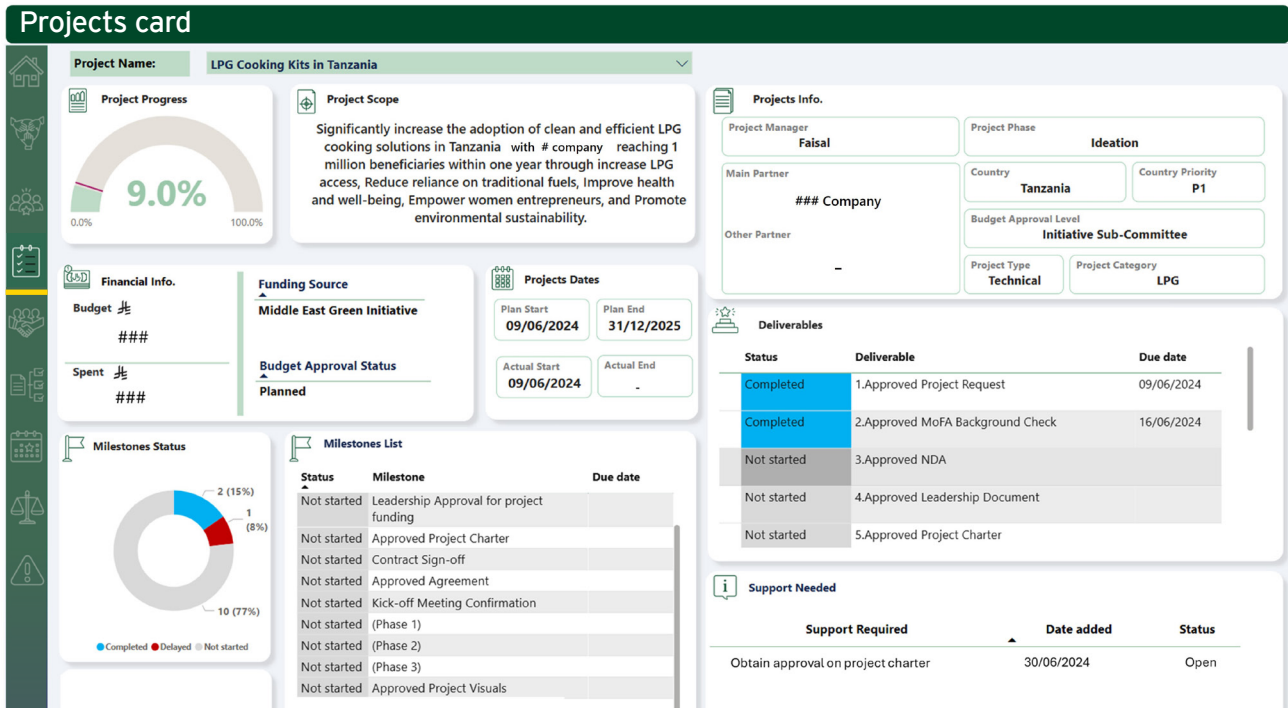


Figure 1.4 presents the Forward7 project card screen

Lastly, the development of a **continuous improvement** framework **enabled** long-term sustainability and adaptability. This framework not only facilitated ongoing enhancements to processes and practices but also reinforced a culture of innovation and responsiveness. This helped the Forward7 maintain its competitive edge and achieve lasting impact in an ever-evolving business environment.

Energizing the future of project management

Forward7's PMO transformation stands as a benchmark for organizations aiming to elevate project governance and execution. By harnessing structured methodologies, data analytics and robust stakeholder collaboration, Forward7 has not only optimized its current operations but also ignited a pathway for future innovation.

With an agile and scalable PMO in place, Forward7 is primed to drive efficiency, sustainability and strategic alignment across its projects. This has helped bring about a profound and lasting impact in the energy sector and beyond. Forward7 and EY teams are committed to exploring new frontiers by continuously refining project management practices to establish new industry benchmarks. By integrating automation and leveraging predictive insights, the PMO will remain at the cutting edge of innovation in the energy sector, energizing its initiatives and propelling the organization toward a dynamic future.

Beyond project management: a legacy of excellence

What began as an initiative to enhance project management governance has transformed into an inspiring journey of continuous excellence at Forward7. By adopting data-driven decision-making and innovative methodologies, the PMO demonstrates a strong commitment to unmatched efficiency and industry leadership.

This initiative goes beyond traditional project management, as Forward7 explores new ways to enhance collaboration and streamline processes across the organization, enhancing its standing as a key player in the energy sector. Looking forward, the Forward7 aims to expand its PMO initiative to address broader challenges in the energy landscape, envisioning the PMO as a catalyst for sustainable practices and strategic advancements.

Through **collaboration, innovation and structured** project management, Forward7 and EY teams are not just managing projects; they are shaping the future of the energy industry locally and internationally. This success story is significantly driven by a dedicated and enthusiastic young Saudi team in the energy sector, whose contributions have been vital to this achievement.



Authors and contributors



Imad Alsadeq

Transformation Delivery
Senior Principal
EY Business Services



Reema Ashgar

Forward7 Initiative Manager



Nasser Ariqat

Transformation Delivery
Senior Manager
EY Business Services



Atheer Alkhalifah

Forward7 PMO Lead



EY | Building a better working world

EY is building a better working world by creating new value for clients, people, society and the planet, while building trust in capital markets.

Enabled by data, AI and advanced technology, EY teams help clients shape the future with confidence and develop answers for the most pressing issues of today and tomorrow.

EY teams work across a full spectrum of services in assurance, consulting, tax, strategy and transactions. Fueled by sector insights, a globally connected, multidisciplinary network and diverse ecosystem partners, EY teams can provide services in more than 150 countries and territories.

All in to shape the future with confidence.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. EY member firms do not practice law where prohibited by local laws. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

The MENA practice of EY has been operating in the region since 1923. Over the past 100 years, we have grown to over 8,500 people united across 26 offices and 15 countries, sharing the same values and an unwavering commitment to quality. As an organization, we continue to develop outstanding leaders who deliver exceptional services to our clients and who contribute to our communities. We are proud of our accomplishments over the years, reaffirming our position as the largest and most established professional services organization in the region.

© 2025 EYGM Limited.

All Rights Reserved.

EYG no. 004901-25Gbl

ED None

This material has been prepared for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be relied upon as accounting, tax, legal or other professional advice. Please refer to your advisors for specific advice.

The views of third parties set out in this publication are not necessarily the views of the global EY organization or its member firms. Moreover, they should be seen in the context of the time they were made.

ey.com