UNIVERSIDAD PARA LA COOPERACION INTERNACIONAL
(UCI)

DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE (PMO) FOR THE ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES (OECS) COMMISSION

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DEDICATION

This final graduation project of the Master's in Project Management Programme required significant effort and sacrifice from me and my loved ones. I see this as a shared achievement, and I dedicate this to all who directly or indirectly supported me on this journey. I wish to especially recognize my husband, Willi Reiner Schmidt, for his unwavering love and support, and my friend, Natasha Augustin, who was one of my strongest supporters in this journey. This would not have been possible without your care and encouragement and so this body of work is dedicated to you both.

Most of all I thank God Almighty for giving me the health, wisdom and support to make good use of this opportunity.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to develop a proposal to redefine the Project Management Office (PMO) at the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission to bring added value for the delivery of sustainable projects. The Commission is increasingly tasked to deliver more regional projects on behalf of its twelve (12) Member States to address priority areas in development. The PMO was introduced to support the successful implementation of projects at the Commission and has since undergone some recent changes in its initial setup. Consequently, there is a need to revisit operations, mandate and structure of the PMO to ensure that it meets the current and emerging needs of the Commission. Additionally, sustainability is becoming a major requirement for OECS projects and the PMO at the Commission should be strengthened to support this emerging need.

The main outputs of this project consist of an assessment of the organisational maturity of the OECS Commission and a review of the operations of the PMO to assess its efficiency and effectiveness. The final deliverables of the research project also include an implementation plan (roadmap) outlining key milestones and SMART actions that enhance the OECS PMO's capacity to support the Commission in undertaking environmental sustainability projects and an associated monitoring framework with appropriate KPIs for measuring success. A communication management plan and a stakeholder management plan for the PMO are also developed. The methodology used is a combination of qualitative analysis, observational research and quantitative analysis. Surveys and interviews with key stakeholders are also an important part of the methodology. Additional recommendations for the PMO are proposed within the context of the organization.

Keywords: Project Management Office, Sustainability,

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BEES	Biodiversity Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services
CDR	Climate and Disaster Resilience
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
ISM	Islands Systems Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
Pf-PMO	Portfolio Management Office
PMI	Project Management Institute
PMO	Project Management Office
PROF	Project Review Oversight Forum
RTB	Revised Treaty of Basseterre
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SE	Sustainable Energy
SOM	Sustainable Ocean Management
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission (OECS Commission), in its role as secretariat to its twelve (12) Member States is tasked with the development and implementation of projects across several priority areas. The projects are geared towards achieving the mission of the OECS, notably that of sustainable development through regional integration, collective action, and development cooperation. The OECS Member States, as small islands, have some peculiar vulnerabilities which make them more susceptible to economic shocks, climate-related events, and natural disasters which can ultimately work against their sustainable development efforts.

The Commission's PMO has instituted some good project management practices and measures, however, these must be reviewed in the context of the global best practices for project management, global changes and regional needs. The PMO must facilitate a more agile and responsive approach to project management. There is also a need for clear and targeted communication from the PMO as well as enhanced stakeholder engagement, to improve overall effectiveness. These can lead to a more collaborative environment amongst stakeholders enabling improved planning, execution, monitoring and closure of sustainable projects for the Eastern Caribbean region.

The general objective of this research paper was to develop a proposal to redefine the Project Management Office at the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission to bring added value to the delivery of sustainable projects. The first specific objective was to assess the maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission and the evolving global project environment to confirm the required type of PMO, its functions, placement and staffing. The research also sought to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs. The third objective of the research was to develop an implementation plan and appropriate key performance indicators, KPIs, for strengthening the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development. The fourth and final specific objective was to develop a stakeholder and communication management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.

The methodology employed for this research project included a combination of qualitative analysis, observational research, and quantitative analysis. Literature review informed the choice of framework used for the maturity assessment highlighting that the OPM3 framework was suitable for government type agencies like the OECS Commission. The assessment was conducted through the administration of a survey to a sample of 8 relevant project staff at the Commission across 4 roles. The sample accounts for key project management roles within the OECS Commission and captures the perspectives of individuals directly involved in project implementation and governance. The survey and interviews were also used to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the PMO. Measures to ensure methodological rigor included grounding the survey instruments in the OPM3 PMO maturity theory, using structured and validated survey and interview tools, ensuring

consistent data collection procedures and applying triangulation between quantitative and qualitative evidence. Transparency was also promoted in the analytical methods for the survey results.

The research results indicate that the OECS PMO currently operates at Late Level 1 to Early Level 2 maturity (OPM3) and in order to advance along the maturity spectrum efforts should address a) PMO governance authority, b) Stakeholder engagement c) Inconsistent adoption of standards d) Cross-department coordination and e) Capacity constraints. A strategic hybrid enterprise PMO is proposed to meet the evolving needs of the organisation for strengthening governance, enhancing sustainability integration, and advancing the OECS Commission's organisational maturity in a phased and sustainable manner. A three phase PMO enhancement plan is proposed which addresses strengthening PMO visibility, integration of PMO considerations into early project design, enhanced communication from the PMO, improved stakeholder engagement, and systematic monitoring of sustainability and PMO performance outcomes.

The research posits that regenerative development can be operationalised in the roadmap through a structured integration process that include making sustainability a mandatory portfolio governance criterion, the use of weighted sustainability scoring in project selection and adding sustainability KPIs into the PMO's dashboards and performance reporting. Through this, the OECS PMO can more effectively support long-term regional resilience and sustainable development goals.

The risk assessment for the PMO enhancement plan undertaken as part of the study indicates that the most significant risks are capacity constraints, funding limitations, leadership sponsorship gaps, and implementation drift. These are high-impact structural risks that can be mitigated by proactive governance controls such as adequate budgeting and high-level support. Moderate risks such as change fatigue and stakeholder misalignment primarily affect adoption quality and are mitigated through an appropriate phased rollout, effective communication strategies, and KPI monitoring.

The OECS Commission's PMO has established a solid foundation, and the next stage of PMO maturity will allow it to consistently delivers strategic value to the Commission, Member States, and development partners in terms of enhancing project delivery, supporting regional priorities, and contributing to long-term sustainable development outcomes for the Eastern Caribbean.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, OECS, forms a contiguous archipelago of islands in the Caribbean Sea. The islands share similar histories, economic conditions and goals and as such promote a unified and collaborative approach to various sectors, including trade, health, education, agriculture, tourism, energy, and monetary policy (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, 2023). OECS's ultimate goal is to establish a cohesive economic entity in the Eastern Caribbean, promoting development and interdependence among its members. The OECS fosters economic cooperation and integration among its members through various initiatives and partnerships working on the region's priority areas. The size of the OECS Member States constrains economic diversification and access to economies of scale, making them highly reliant on sectors like tourism and agriculture. The region, like that of many Small Islands Developing States, SIDS, has inherent vulnerabilities that increase their exposure to external economic shocks, climate-related events, and natural disasters, challenging their sustainable development efforts.

The OECS Commission is an important organ of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. The Commission supports the OECS through the coordination and implementation of several projects. These projects serve as a vehicle of functional cooperation towards a shared goal. The projects are generally designed to cover at least three beneficiary countries so that regional collaboration can be leveraged for maximum benefit. A regional project approach is advantageous for several reasons. Regional projects can leverage economies of scale for a fairly homogenous group such as the OECS. Regional projects also support the work of developmental partner and donors who often sponsor projects in the OECS as they can allow for easier administration of more than one country support at a time and efficient use of limited funding.

The global environment for the types of projects being implemented by the OECS is evolving due to geopolitical changes which are impacting the priorities of the OECS Members States as well as funding partners. The environmental sustainability field is increasing in importance, and the Commission continues to see an increase in projects in the area of energy, climate change, ocean governance and biodiversity for example. The nature of the activities undertaken as well as the conditions for project implementation are also changing and it is important that the Commission, led by its PMO, is responsive and agile to address these developments.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The number of projects being implemented by the OECS Commission is increasing as the organisation responds to the various emerging needs of its Member States and as it works to design and implement strategic measures to address these challenges. The OECS

Commission strives to hire and retain highly qualified project teams including project managers to successfully execute its projects. It has also recognised the value of a strategic approach to project management into its operations with the establishment of a Project Management Office (PMO). Whilst the PMO has undertaken some capacity-building work in project management, supported the standardization of reporting on projects, and shared lessons learned and best practices for project management, there is still a need at the OECS Commission to better integrate the PMO into the design and delivery of sustainable projects.

The current PMO plays a pivotal role in the approval of projects undertaken by the Commission, through an internal multidisciplinary board. However, as the number and complexity of projects undertaken by the organisation grow, there is a need to enhance the quality of the projects to meet the growing demands of the Member States. Sustainability is becoming a key criterion for success which will have to be integrated into all projects. The Commission has long recognised the need for a more integrated and inclusive approach to the development and implementation of projects. This is particularly important as both the Member States and the Commission have comparatively small project implementation units. There is a growing requirement that projects should consider economic, social and environmental factors as well as the long-term impacts of projects. Increasingly, gender indicators, and environmental and social safeguards are becoming a major requirement for most donor funded projects undertaken in the OECS. Projects are also being required to have a built-in resilient component that addresses the vulnerabilities of these islands. These new trends in projects call for a new approach to project management which the PMO and the entire Commission must consider.

A review of the OECS Commission website shows that it is implementing approximately 50 projects across its divisions; however, the actual number may be greater (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, 2023). Currently, the projects implemented at the Commission show diversity in several ways including, size, number of Member States participating, scope, and structure. Some projects address policy and research whilst other projects may be more hands-on working on delivering activities on the ground with communities such as fishermen, agricultural workers and photovoltaic installers. The funding mechanisms, procurement rules and level of resources and staffing for projects also differ based on the project sponsor and the conditions negotiated. The Commission may also experience various levels of involvement in the design of the projects. The Commission may lead the process of project design or may join the project at a more advanced stage when project conceptualisation is already significantly advanced. The requirements for project sponsors and partners also vary with respect to approvals and reporting. These various project implementation scenarios lead to different project management practices in the organisation. Whilst there is a need for agility for project management, there is also a need for standardisation and best practices which represent the values of the Commission.

Currently there is limited collated aggregated data on projects implemented by the Commission and project reporting is largely driven by donor requirements. This makes it challenging to get an overall picture of the project performance. Hence it would be necessary to find suitable comparable agencies to estimate the project performance. It is difficult to find published data on the performance of PMOs and projects in the Caribbean. Due to the lack of publicly available portfolio performance data for the OECS Commission, it is methodologically sound to adopt performance benchmarks from a comparable international project delivery organisation. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provides an appropriate reference point due to its institutional mandate, operational model, and delivery context. UNOPS functions as an execution-focused delivery body, managing public-sector projects across small and capacity-constrained states like the OECS region. This operational profile is comparable to the OECS Commission's role in coordinating and overseeing donor-funded and regionally implemented projects. A report by the UNOPS indicated that in 2015, 76 percent of their projects were on track for schedule and, 82 per cent was on track for cost (United Nations Office for Project Services, 2017). Whilst these figures are from 10 years ago, they may be suitable for the current OECS Commission context. The use of UNOPS' schedule adherence and cost adherence figures provides a credible, context-appropriate, and methodologically justified benchmark for the OECS Commission PMO. These metrics can provide an evidence-based starting point for institutionalising performance measurement and strengthening project governance within the OECS framework. Adopting UNOPS-aligned indicators can allow the OECS Commission PMO to establish baseline metrics, assess portfolio risk exposure, and track performance trends over time. Sustainability metrics are not currently measured in projects at the Commission.

Although the OECS Commission has a dedicated Environmental Sustainability Division that already seeks to implement sustainable projects, there is the need to have sustainability considerations for all projects given the associated benefits. In this endeavour, the PMO will have to play an important role for establishment and standardisation in the context of sustainability. The existing PMO must therefore be enhanced to ensure that sustainability is incorporated into project management in the organisation through structured processes in the project life cycle. There is also need for continuous tracking of sustainability performance indicators to ensure that the projects are aligned with sustainable objectives.

The OECS Commission has seen an increase in staff trained and certified in project management at various levels in recent years. The PMO has sought to build on this cadre of professionals to bring added value to the Commission and its Member States by improved project management practices. The PMO, however, being relatively new, remains an entity which is not very well known and appreciated by staff at the Commission who do not work directly with it. The role of the PMO in project delivery and the need to engage with the PMO from early project conceptualisation has not been well understood and leveraged for the good of the organisation. There is the need for a communication plan that will promote and support the work of the PMO. In the absence of such a communication plan the requirements and work of the PMO can be seen as an additional layer of bureaucracy for the rest of the Commission, leading to ineffective functioning of the PMO processes. Related to this, is the need for engagement of the PMO stakeholders for collaboration in the design and implementation of successful projects. An effective engagement plan for the PMO is needed to provide a structured approach for working with all stakeholders

1.3. Purpose

The purpose of this project is to propose some key measures that will support the OECS Commission in enhancing its PMO that will ultimately lead to more effective operations in project management particularly with respect to ensuring sustainable projects. The project will undertake an assessment of the organisational maturity of the OECS

Commission. This assessment helps reveal hidden gaps, identify areas for improvement, and prioritise actions needed to build a more agile and resilient organisation. The organisational maturity assessment involves an in-depth evaluation process essential for determining efficiency and alignment with strategic goals and assessing systems' functionality, scalability, and business alignment (Chatterjee, 2024). Additionally, the organisational maturity assesses the organisational culture for determining whether it fosters collaboration and accountability and identifies potential silos and resistance to change, providing valuable insights for strengthening the organisational culture.

The organisational maturity assessment will also help identify potential operational vulnerabilities so that the OECS Commission can take proactive measures to mitigate risks and ensure business continuity, thus safeguarding long-term sustainability (Chatterjee, 2024). This assessment will help with recommendations for improving organisational maturity which will ensure that all parts of the organisation are aligned with the set strategic goals. This alignment will support the reduction of inefficiencies and the waste of valuable resources. Ensuring that every part of the organisation actively contributes to strategic objectives will mean that the commission can operate more cohesively and effectively.

The organisational maturity assessment will enable the Commission to evaluate its readiness for scaling without compromising quality in the face of growing demand for support to its Member States. This is particularly important to avoid operational breakdowns during periods of expansion, enabling the Commission to sustain its quality standards even as it grows and expands. The resulting enhancement plan and recommendations will help the Commission build on its reputation and attract good partnerships and funding to undertake its continued work. The assessment of the organisational maturity will also help the Commission to assess whether its culture and systems support rapid iteration. This is important for enhancing innovation and agility, which are critical in today's rapidly changing business landscape. Assessing the Commission's organisational maturity will also support strategic alignment of initiatives undertaken by the Commission helping to maximize the return on investment and enhancing the overall effectiveness of strategic endeavours (Chatterjee, 2024).

The study will also examine the activities and operations of the current PMO at the Commission. This is important to evaluate whether the type of PMO is the most appropriate, whether the PMO is ideally situated and whether it is appropriately staffed and resourced to undertake its roles and responsibilities to meet current and projected demands and expectations of the OECS Commission. The purpose here is to highlight any opportunities or deficiencies that can be addressed for the improvement of the organization. Recommendations will be generated by examining best practices, recommended approaches and through critical assessment of the feedback of key stakeholders. The research project's recommendations are expected to support a PMO that can provide additional benefits to the OECS Commission including facilitation of:

- Improved overall project success rate for the Commission's business strategy,
- Establishment of appropriate and acceptable policies, standards, and procedures for sustainability
- Enhanced appreciation for and engagement with the PMO.

The Commission currently has a small PMO and as the number of projects at Commission increases, it is beneficial to assess how the current PMO can be redefined to enable the Commission to better meet its mandate and fulfil the emerging needs of the OECS. The OECS Commission is also seeking accreditation to both the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund and if successful, this will result in even more projects being delivered through the Commission. An enhanced PMO will greatly support the organization in increased quality of project development as well as execution.

The research project is also expected to support a communication plan for the PMO. A PMO communication plan is essential for ensuring effective information flow among stakeholders, aligning project goals, and enhancing collaboration within the PMO. It helps prevent misunderstandings, keeps everyone aligned with project goals, and fosters a collaborative environment. By ensuring that the right information reaches the right people at the right time, the PMO can enhance project outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction. The research project will also support a sustainable project management framework for the Commission that prioritises resource efficiency, collaboration, innovative tools, and adheres to established sustainability principles.

1.4. General Objective

To develop a proposal to redefine the Project Management Office at the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission to bring added value for the delivery of sustainable projects.

1.5. Specific Objectives

1. To assess the maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission and the evolving global project environment to confirm the required type of PMO, its functions, placement and staffing.

2. To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs.

3. To develop an implementation plan and appropriate Key Performance Indicators, KPIs, for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development.

4. To develop a stakeholder and communication management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework supports the theory of the research study and explains the significance and validity of the study by indicating gaps of knowledge and practice that the researcher intends to fill. The theoretical framework for the project will be elaborated in sections below.

2.1 Company/Enterprise Framework

2.1.1 Company/Enterprise Background

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is an International Inter-governmental Organisation dedicated to regional integration in the Eastern Caribbean, which was created on June 18th, 1981, when seven Eastern Caribbean countries signed the Treaty of Basseterre. Currently the OECS twelve (12)-member grouping of islands spread across the Eastern Caribbean. The OECS Member States are Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Montserrat, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Martinique , Guadeloupe and Saint Martin (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, 2022). The OECS has five main organs with the OECS Authority established as the supreme policy-making body of the OECS and is responsible for the general direction and control of the performance and functions of the Organisation. The Authority is made up of the Heads of Government of the Member States made up of the Prime Ministers/Chief Ministers of each Member State.

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission serves as the secretariat to the OECS, coordinating meetings of the OECS Authority and the Council of Ministers and also conducts other work in some key areas such as social inclusion, economic growth and environmental protection (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, 2022).

According to Article 24 of the Protocol of Eastern Caribbean Economic Union to the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (RTB), each Protocol Member State is expected to implement the St. George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS to minimize environmental vulnerability, improve environmental management and protect the region's natural (including historical and cultural) resource base for optimal social and economic benefits for Member States(Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. (2001). The Environmental Sustainability Division of the Commission is responsible for implementing the strategic actions contained in the Revised St George’s Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS called SGD 2040. The Division has four main programmatic areas – Biodiversity Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services (BEES), Sustainable Ocean Management (SOM), Sustainable Energy (SE), and Climate and Disaster Resilience (CDR) (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, 2022)

2.1.2 Mission and Vision Statements

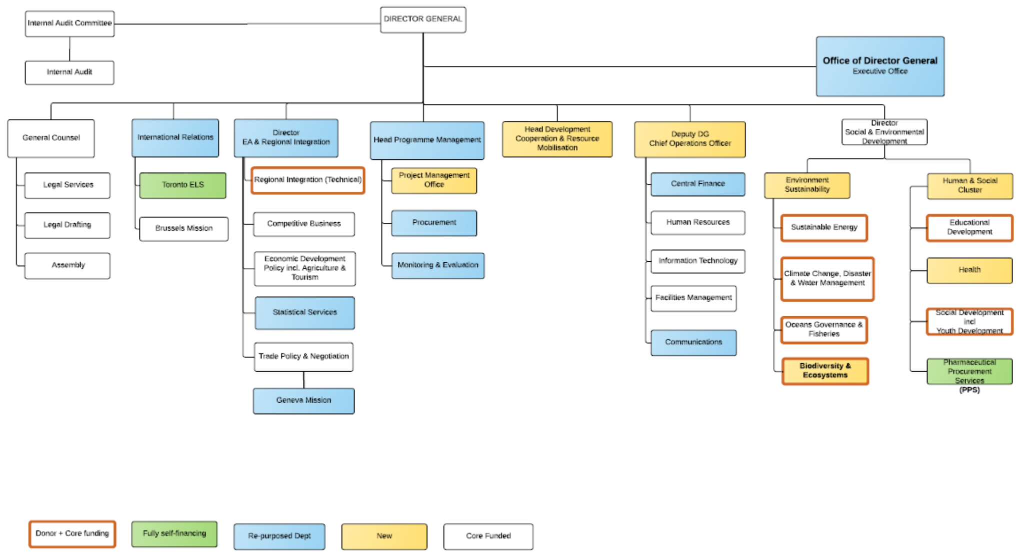
The vision of the organization is "A better quality of life for the people of the OECS”. The OECS Commission is able to improve the lives of its people through the successful implementation of regional projects across a range of disciplines including health, education and the environment (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, 2022).

The Organisation's Mission Statement is "To drive and support sustainable development through regional integration collective action and development cooperation". Ensuring that sustainable development is a key feature of the projects implemented by the Commission will allow it to achieve its mission. An effective PMO will support delivery and coordination of projects towards regional integration and an enhanced quality of life in the OECS (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, 2022).

2.1.3 Organisational Structure

In order to carry out these services, the OECS Commission is organized into four Divisions, namely the Director-General Division, Operations Division, Economic Affairs & Regional Integration Division, and Human & Social Development Division. Please see figure 1 for the organisational chart of the Commission. The technical programmes of the OECS Commission are supported by some key units including Procurement, Human Resources, Communications, Finance and a Project Management Unit.

Figure 1 Organisational Chart OECS Commission (Source: OECS Commission Human Resources Department, 2025)



2.1.4 Products Offered

The OECS Commission offers a number of products including:

- Research
- Capacity building

- Reports and assessments
- Technical assistance and technical advice
- Conferences, Meetings, Workshops
- Project execution
- Regional policies and frameworks

2.2 Project Management Concepts

2.2.1 Project Management Principles

The Project Management Institute (PMI) recognises 12 management principles that serve as foundational guidelines for strategy, decision making and problem solving. These principles are not prescriptive in nature but rather serve to guide the behaviour of people involved in projects. These principles are also aligned with the 4 values of the PMI Code of ethics and professional conduct, namely, Responsibility, Respect, Fairness and Honesty (Project Management Institute, 2021). The principles are complementary to the values of the code of ethics but are not duplicative.

The twelve principles are as follows:

- Be a diligent, respectful and caring steward
- Create a collaborative project team environment
- Effectively engage with stakeholders
- Focus on value
- Recognize, evaluate, and respond to system interactions

- Demonstrate leadership behaviours
- Tailor based on context
- Build quality into processes and deliverables
- Navigate complexity
- Optimize risk responses
- Embrace adaptability and resiliency
- Enable change to achieve the envisioned future state

A) Be a Diligent, Respectful and Caring Steward

The stewardship principle addresses responsibilities within and external to the organization and includes integrity, care, trustworthiness and compliance with internal and external guidelines. Stewardship entails a broad commitment to financial, technical, social and environmental impacts of projects. It embodies the diligent oversight of organisational finances, materials and other resources used with a project. Additionally, it ensures the appropriate use of authority, accountability, and responsibility particularly in leadership positions (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 24)

The stewardship principle can be operationalised on projects by ensuring that the recommendations for the PMO addresses and supports compliance with relevant laws, rules, regulations for projects and makes prudent use of the finances, materials and other resources in projects. Ensuring good stewardship will also entail paying close and careful attention to details to ensure a high quality of deliverables. This will also consider transparent and timely communication and reporting, fair procurement and ethical decisions in projects.

B) Create a Collaborative Project Team Environment

This team related principle recognises that projects are delivered by teams made up of individuals with diverse skills, knowledge, and experience. Hence a team working collaboratively can accomplish a shared objective more effectively and efficiently than individuals working on their own and is therefore more successful. Creating a collaborative team environment promotes benefits including alignment with other organisational cultures and guidelines, individual and team learning and development, free exchange of information and enhanced communication and optimal contributions to deliver desired outcome (Project Management Institute, 2021, p. 28).

To operationalise this principle, the recommendations for the PMO will address measures for ensuring clear accountability and responsibility whilst simultaneously addressing shared vision and collective ownership of projects. An inclusive environment culture will be engendered though regular meetings and exchanges, collaborative planning and the cross fertilisation of ideas for problem solving. All opinions and ideas will be considered using techniques such as focus groups and brainstorming and conflict resolution strategies will be promoted.

C) Effectively Engage with Stakeholders

This principle recognises that stakeholders can directly or indirectly influence projects, performance, and outcomes either positively or negatively (Project Management Institute, 2021, p. 31). It is therefore imperative to engage stakeholders proactively and to the degree needed to contribute to project success and customer satisfaction.

Operationalization of this principle requires early dialogue with stakeholders followed by regular updates and meetings. Consultations with stakeholders should allow for all voices to be heard and for conflict resolution.

D) Focus on Value

The value principle on project management is an important one which seeks to strike a balance between benefits gained and resources spent. This principle requires continual evaluation and adjustment of project alignment to business objectives and intended benefits and value. It recognises value as the ultimate indicator of project success and that value can be realized throughout the project, at the end of the project, or after the project is complete (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 34).

Operationalisation of this principle can be achieved by ensuring that the PMO constantly promotes the need for value in the planning and execution of projects by the organisation and supports the OECS Commission in the selection and implementation of such projects. The PMO should have a good appreciation of the needs and priorities of the OECS Member States and facilitate regular meetings with them and other stakeholders to ensure that the Commission meets their needs. The PMO recommended will also put in place measures to ascertain that the business case is regularly reviewed to ensure the delivery of value through enhanced project performance and reduced inefficiencies and wastage. This should include PMO support to the organisation for accurately determining the status of projects, estimating and the application of agile principles for value driven projects. Capacity should also be built in the organisation to define the value of projects in quantitative and qualitative terms.

E) Recognize, Evaluate, and Respond to System Interactions

The Systems Thinking principle entails taking a holistic view of how project parts interact with each other and with external systems. The principle seeks to recognize, evaluate, and respond to the dynamic circumstances within and surrounding the project in a holistic way to positively affect project performance. It recognises a project as a system of interdependent and interacting domains of activity and that systems are constantly changing, requiring consistent attention to the internal and external conditions (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 37).

Operationalisation of this principle will be realised by recommending measures that the PMO obtain an overall, bird’s eye view of all projects in the organisation and provides guidance on timing, savings, synergies and opportunities. The PMO should also address issues of change control protocols for obtaining approvals from external entities. Vigilance measures are also necessary for monitoring changing system dynamics. The use of methods and techniques such as systems mapping and action learning should also be promoted to identify interdependencies and risks. Regular reviews and adjustments in this regard, are paramount.

F) Demonstrate Leadership Behaviours

This principle recognizes that effective leadership promotes project success and contributes to positive project outcomes and seeks to demonstrate and adapt leadership behaviours to support individual and team needs. It further recognises that any project team member can demonstrate leadership behaviours and that effective leaders adapt their style to the situation but always display honesty, integrity, and ethical conduct (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 40).

Operationalisation of this principle will be realised in ensuring that PMO lead by example in displaying the values of the organisation, mentoring other organisation team members and helping them to understand the organisation's vision and their expected role. The PMO should also actively support creativity and motivation of others whilst displaying empathy.

G) Tailor Based on Context

This principle speaks to adapting methods to fit the project context. It underscores that each project is unique, and project success is based on adapting to the unique context of the project to determine the most appropriate methods of producing the desired outcomes. The tailoring principles advocates for a project development approach based on the context of the project, its objectives, stakeholders, governance, and the environment using “just enough” process to achieve the desired outcome while maximizing value, managing cost, and enhancing speed (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 44).

This principle will be operationalized by ensuring that the PMO and project management in the organization have provisions established for regular review and discussions about how the work is going. There should also be measures for regular feedback to support improvements. The PMO will be required to work with project teams to discuss and decide tailoring of the delivery approach, processes to be used, development approach, methods and artifacts on a project-by-project basis. The change management process will also be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose for the project and allows for the appropriate modifications as needed. The redesign of PMO should also consider the unique, evolving needs and circumstances of the organization.

H) Build Quality into Processes and Deliverables

The quality principle promotes maintaining a focus on deliverables that meet project objectives and align to the needs, uses, and acceptance levels set forth by relevant stakeholders. It addresses the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of a product, service, or result fulfils the requirements (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 47).

To operationalize this principle, quality should be built into processes to obtain results that are relevant and meets the needs of the organization. The PMO should be developed based on the identified needs of the organization’s stakeholders and there should be standardization of processes and products that support quality. There should be a clear shared understanding of what is quality work and how it is measured. Efforts should also ensure that there are sufficient tools, resources and time to deliver quality.

I) Navigate Complexity

This principle addresses the ability to deal successfully with complexity in projects which results from human behaviour, system interactions, uncertainty, and ambiguity. The complexity of project management can be introduced by events or conditions that affect value, scope, communications, stakeholders, risk, and technological innovation, It is important that project teams remain vigilant in identifying elements of complexity and use a variety of methods to reduce the amount or impact of complexity on projects (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 50).

Operationalization of this principle can be achieved through the empowerment of the organization's team to successfully modify their activities to address impacts that can occur due to complexity. Operationalization will also require ensuring the right people with the appropriate levels of expertise for projects, as well as the use of robust tools and techniques. Efforts should be made to foster an environment of problem solving and continuous learning. Support for regular and effective team collaboration, and smooth communication are also needed.

J) Optimize risk responses

The risk response principle seeks to continually evaluate exposure to risk (both opportunities and threats), to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts to the project and its outcomes. This principle appreciates that both individual and overall risks (positive or negative) can impact projects and should be addressed continually throughout the project. It also advocates that the risk responses should be appropriate for the significance of the risk, cost-effective, agreed to by relevant stakeholders, and owned by a responsible person (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 53).

To operationalise this principle, the PMO will institutionalise procedures, tools and techniques for early and continual identification, categorisation and monitoring of risks. Effective risk management capability and strategies should be developed in the organisation using lessons learned. Optimizing risk responses should be a priority for the PMO and the organisation should establish clear procedures for assessing available options for risk response and for selecting the best way forward.

K) Embrace Adaptability and Resiliency

This principle recognises that most projects encounter challenges or obstacles at some stage and the need to build adaptability and resiliency into an organization's and project team's approaches for success. Adaptability enables quick adjustments to changing conditions, while resiliency allows for quick recovery from setbacks (Project Management

Institute, 2021, p 55). To achieve this, a focus on outcomes rather than outputs is recommended.

Operationalization of this principle requires a culture that maintains flexibility and focus on the project's goals and objectives. This will require promoting the ability to leverage new ways of thinking and working in the organisation and fostering continuous learning and improvement to be able to move and adapt quickly. The PMO working with the rest of the organisation will have to employ open and transparent planning and engagement of stakeholders, short feedback loops and make optimum use of diverse ideas.

L) Enable Change to Achieve the Envisioned Future State

This change-centred principle recognises that change is inevitable in project management and can originate from internal or external sources. The principle seeks to help organisations successfully manage a transition to a new future state by prepare individuals and groups impacted for the adoption of new behaviours and processes created by the project outcomes. The principle recognises the need for a structured approach to change management and measures to engage stakeholders and motivate them to embrace change to ensure success (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 58).

Operationalization of this principle will entail clearly communicating why the change is required, the benefits, and how will it impact the organization. Communication should also address the consequences if the change does not go ahead. Operationalization will also entail ensuring that the necessary training and structural adjustments are made to accommodate the PMO. Development of an appropriate timeline with milestones would also be useful.

2.2.2 Project Management Domains

A Project Performance Domain is defined as a group of related activities that are critical for the effective delivery of project outcomes (Project Management Institute, 2021, p. 7). There are eight project performance domains:

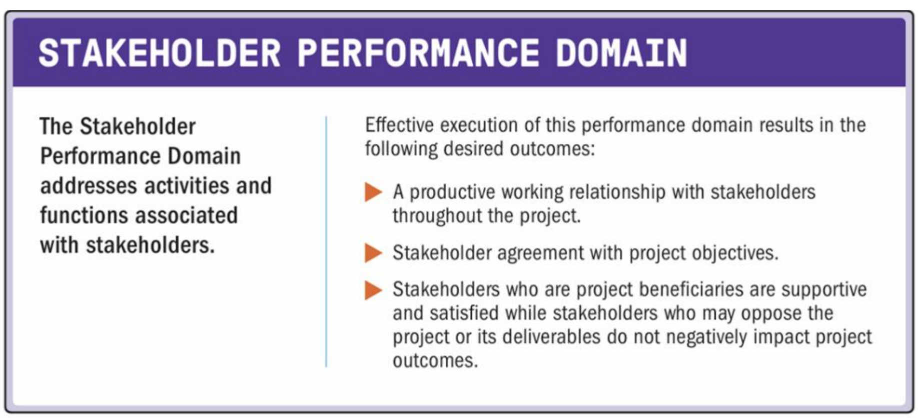
- Stakeholders
- Team
- Development Approach and Life Cycle
- Planning
- Project work
- Delivery
- Measurement
- Uncertainty

The project performance domains are interactive, interrelated, and interdependent areas of focus that work in unison to achieve desired project outcomes. Together the project performance domains operate as an integrated system, with each performance domain being interdependent of the other performance domains to enable successful delivery of the project and its intended outcomes. Performance domains run concurrently throughout projects regardless of how value is delivered (Project Management Institute, 2021, p.7).

Stakeholders Performance Domain

This performance domain, shown in figure 2, recognises that effective stakeholder interaction contributes to successful project outcomes. Stakeholders include individuals, groups, or organisations that may affect, be affected, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project, program or portfolio. Stakeholders can be internal or external. Stakeholders must be identified, analysed and engaged by implementing strategies and actions to promote their productive involvement in project decision making and implementation (Project Management Institute, 2021).

Figure 2 Stakeholder Performance Domain (Source: Project Management Institute, 2021)



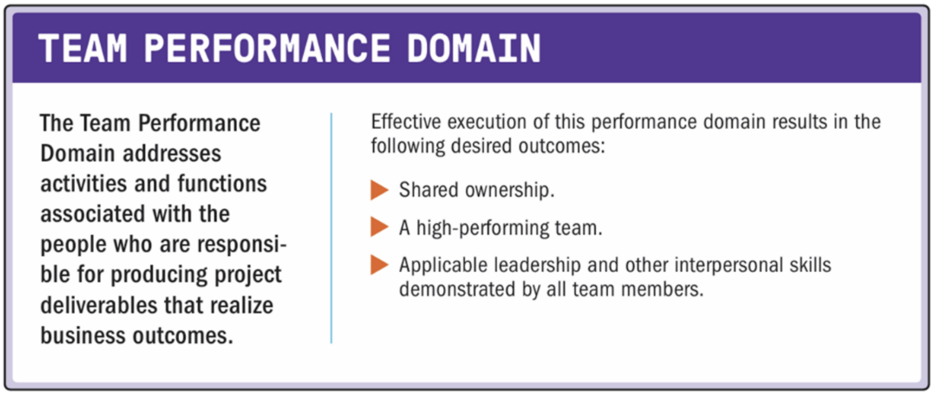
Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

In the context of this research project, the internal and external stakeholders including the beneficiaries of projects in the OECS Member States will be identified and assessed for the power, influence and impact to develop recommendations for the PMO. The research will seek to generate an understanding of the stakeholders' feelings, beliefs and values with respect to the current PMO and also the expectations of an effective PMO. The analysis will help with the maturity assessment of the organisation. The results will also support the development of recommendations for the roles and functions of the PMO. Additionally, recommendations will address sustained and effective stakeholder engagement with the PMO to meet stakeholders' needs and expectations.

Team Performance Domain

The team performance domain shown in figure 3 entails establishing the culture and environment that enables a collection of diverse individuals to evolve into a high-performing project team. The project team is a set of individuals performing the work of the project to achieve its objectives. An environment supportive of a high-performing team includes fostering team development, encouraging leadership behaviors from all project team members and sharing ownership for the outcomes (Project Management Institute, 2021).

Figure 3 Team Performance Domain (Source:Project Management Institute, 2021)



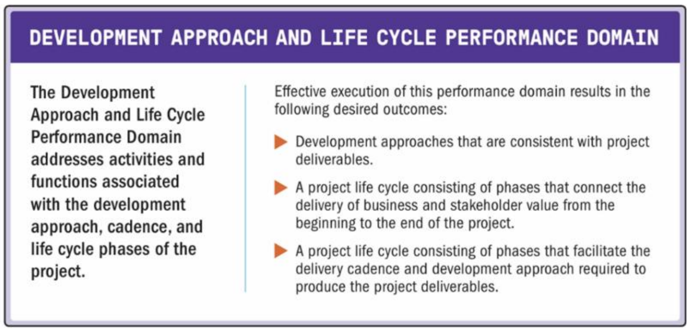
Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

As part of this research project, analysis of the PMO team will be conducted to see how well they function as a team and to ensure that the requisite skills exist in the organisation. An assessment of how the PMO collaborates with other teams in the organisation will also be conducted. This research project will make recommendations for the structure, role and functions of the PMO to meet the needs of the organization. It will also recommend specific capacity building of the PMO team and other projects teams to support them as high-performing teams for Project management in the Commission.

Development Approach and Life Cycle Domain

The development approach and life cycle performance domain, shown in figure 4 entails establishing the development approach, delivery cadence and project life cycle needed to optimize project outcomes (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 32). The most appropriate development approach (e.g. predictive, adaptive, or hybrid approach) is determined based on the project deliverables. The PMO proposed under the FGP is expected to help guide the selection and processes for the development approach and the project life cycle in the organization.

Figure 4 Development Approach and Life Cycle Performance Domain (Source: Project Management Institute , 2021)

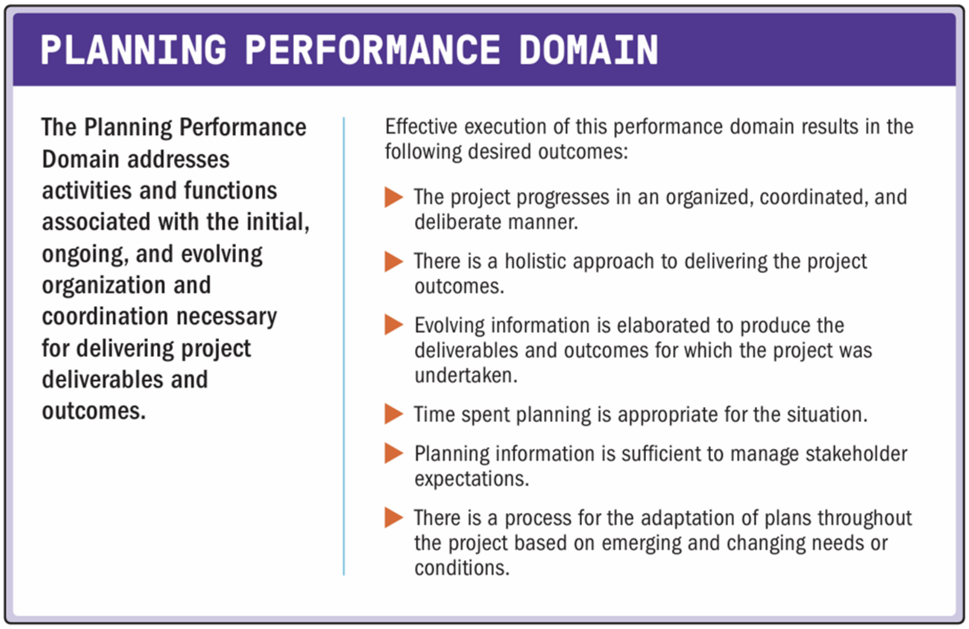


Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

Planning Performance Domain

The Planning performance domain shown in figure 5 entails organizing, elaborating and coordinating work throughout the project (Project Management Institute, 2021, p 51). The purpose of planning is to develop an approach to create the project deliverables.

Figure 5 Planning Performance Domain (Source:Project Management Institute, 2021)



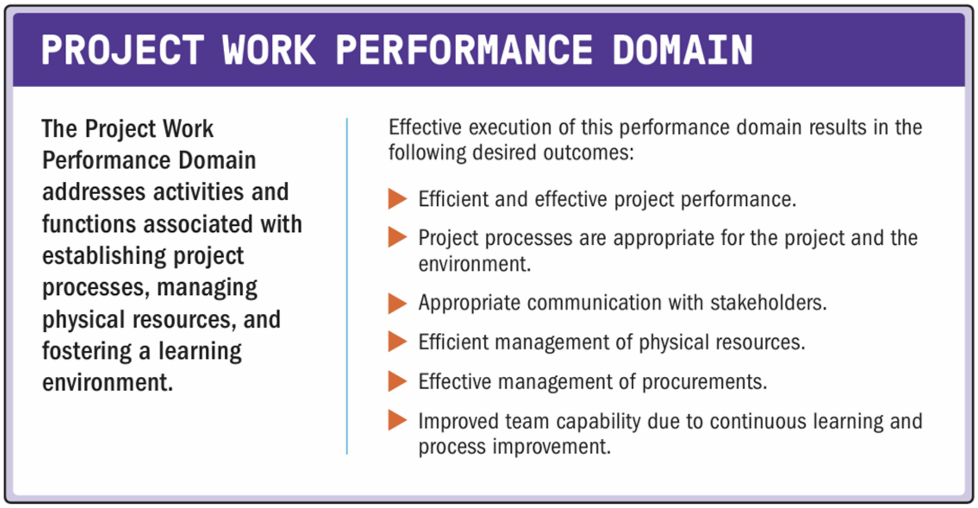
Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

Planning organizes, elaborates, and coordinates work throughout the project. Planning takes place up front and throughout the project. The amount, timing, and frequency varies depending on the product, development approach, environment, and stakeholders.

For this research project, the recommendations for the PMO should address its role in supporting planning projects for the organisation.

Project Work Domain

Figure 6 Project Work Performance Domain (Source: Project Management Institute, 2021)



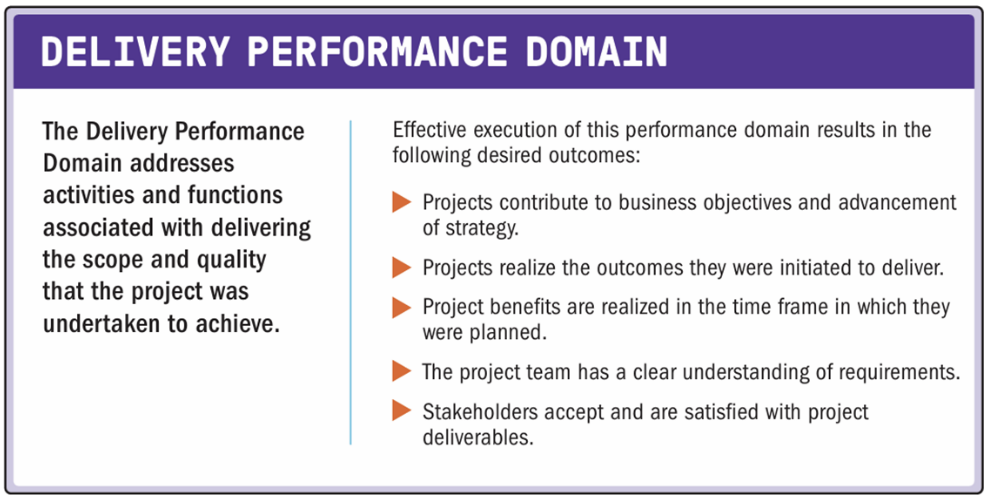
Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

The project work performance domain shown in figure 6 is associated with establishing the processes and performing the work to enable the project team to deliver the expected value and outcomes. Project work is broad and includes communication, engagement, managing physical resources, procurements and other work areas needed to keep project operations functioning well. With respect to the FGP, recommendations will be put forward on how the PMO can be strengthened to improve the oversight of the work of the projects including ensuring alignment to the organisational strategy and objectives, provision of guidelines and standards for efficiency and quality.

Delivery Performance Domain

Project delivery performance domain shown in figure 7 focuses on meeting requirements , scope , and quality expectations to produce the expected deliverables that will drive the intended outcomes (Project Management Institute, 2021, p.80).

Figure 7 Delivery Performance Domain (Source: Project Management Institute, 2021)



Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

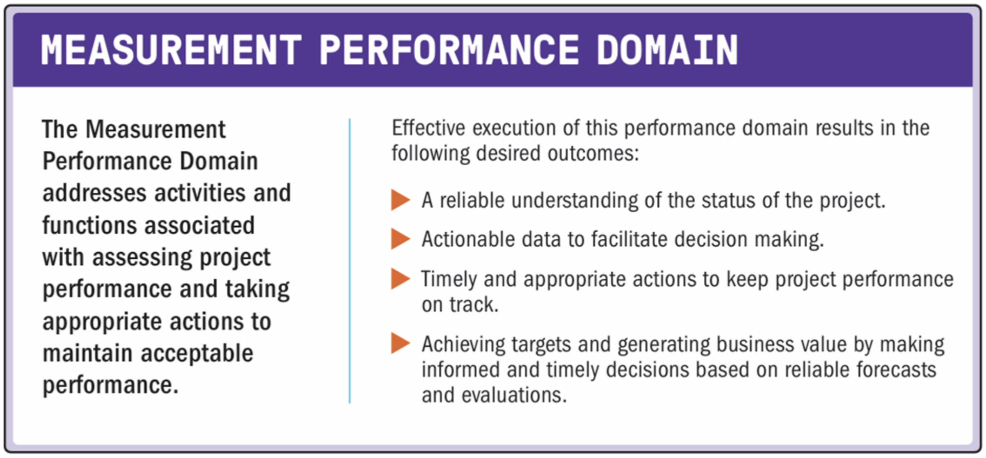
Projects support strategy execution and advancing business objectives. Project delivery focuses on meeting requirements, scope, and quality expectations to deliver the expected outputs that will drive intended outcomes. Business value is provided by developing new products or services, solving problems, or fixing things that were defective or sub-optimal. Projects may use a delivery approach that supports releasing deliverables throughout the project life cycle, at specific points, or at the end of the project. Business value often continues to be captured long after the project has ended

For this research project, the recommended PMO will be expected to support delivery of the organization's projects through fostering delivery and outcomes-oriented capabilities. The enhanced PMO will be expected to keep the 'big picture' perspective and facilitate continuous improvement, knowledge transfer, and change management (Project Management Institute, 2021, p. 213).

Measurement Performance Domain

The measurement performance domain as shown in figure 8 evaluates the degree to which the project deliveries and performance are meeting the intended outcomes. This performance domain also addresses the implementation of appropriate responses to maintain optimal performance. As part of this research project, an assessment of how the current PMO impacts project performance will be undertaken, and recommendations will be made for measuring PMO's impact on project performance in the future. Timely and accurate information about delivery and performance will assist the Commission in learning and determining the appropriate action to take to address current or expected variances from the desired performance.

Figure 8 Measurement Performance Domain (Source: Project Management Institute, 2021)

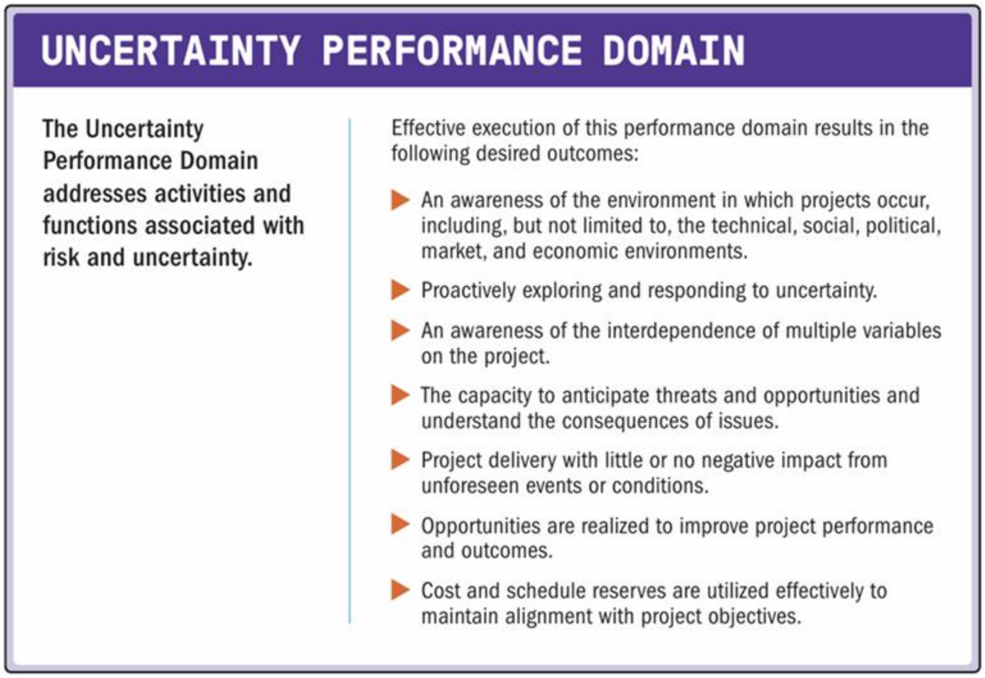


Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOKGuide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

The Uncertainty Domain

The uncertainty performance domain addresses activities and functions associated with risks and uncertainty as shown in figure 9. The domain recognises that projects exist in environments with varying degrees of uncertainty, and uncertainty presents threats and opportunities that project teams must determine how best to handle. Recommendations for strengthening the PMO at the Commission will explicitly address how the PMO can better support the organization's projects in managing uncertainty and risks.

Figure 9 Uncertainty Performance Domain (Source: Project Management Institute, 2021)



Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

2.2.3 Predictive, Adaptive, and Hybrid Projects

The PMI puts forward three commonly used development approaches for projects, predictive, adaptive and hybrid. These development approaches can be viewed as a spectrum becoming more iterative and incremental, moving from predictive to hybrid and adaptive.

Predictive Projects

Predictive or waterfall projects have well defined requirements, which can be collected and analysed at the start of the Project. The scope, schedule, cost and resource needs and risks can be well defined in the early phases of the Project life cycle, and they are relatively stable. Predictive projects generally have a significant investment and a high level of risks that require frequent reviews, change control mechanisms, and replanning between development phases. With predictive projects the Project team can reduce the level of uncertainty early in the Project and do much of the planning up front. Such projects often have templates from previous, similar projects (Project Management Institute, 2017).

Adaptive Projects

Adaptive projects have requirements that are subject to a high level of uncertainty and volatility, and these requirements are likely to change throughout the Project. With adaptive projects, there is an established at the start of Project and the initial known requirements are refined, detailed, changed or replaced based on user feedback, the environment, or unexpected events. Adaptive projects use iterative and incremental development approaches. Agile projects can be considered as adaptive projects (Project Management Institute, 2017).

Hybrid Projects

Hybrid projects employ a development approach which is a combination of the adaptive and predictive approaches. Consequently, hybrid projects use some elements of the predictive approach and some elements from an adaptive approach. Hybrid projects often have deliverables that can be modularized or that can be developed by different Project teams. In short, a hybrid Project is more adaptive than a predictive approach but less so than a purely adaptive Project.

The PMO proposed is a hybrid project given that some elements of the development will be predictive whilst others will be adaptive. The OECS Commission manages a wide range of diverse projects, including some climate change projects and some projects that are aimed towards new initiatives that are not very well defined. The use of a hybrid development approach will provide the PMO the benefits of both the predictive and the adaptive development approach as needed. Given complexity of projects at the Commission and the need to learn during implementation, it is expected that the PMO would also need to support hybrid development approaches.

2.2.4 Project Management

Project management refers to the structured use of specialised knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques in project activities to meet project requirements. It involves planning, executing, and overseeing projects to ensure they are completed on time, within scope, and within budget (Project Management Institute, 2017). Key elements of project management include defining project objectives, managing resources, monitoring progress, and communicating effectively with stakeholders. It requires defining clear project goals, scope, timelines, and deliverables, as well as identifying and allocating resources, managing risks, and ensuring effective communication among team members and stakeholders. Project management provides structure and control, enabling teams to navigate complexities, meet deadlines, and deliver high-quality results. It further emphasizes the efficient utilization of resources, adherence to budgets, and mitigation of risks and issues throughout the project lifecycle. Effective project management plays a crucial role in driving success, fostering collaboration, and achieving desired project outcomes (Folaron, 2023).

Project management is important because it provides the leadership, motivation, and problem-solving that enables teams to introduce new products or services, grow revenue, and meet company goals. Effective project management can improve workflows helping to reduce mistakes, overspending, or other project challenges (Hartshorne, 2024).

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to project management and the best methodology often depends on the specific needs and constraints of the project and organization. These include project complexity and scope, flexibility of the work environment, alignment with organisational goals and team values and industry requirements and regulations (Hartshorne, 2024). A project management methodology is a guiding framework for teams to follow as they plan, execute, and successfully close projects. A project management methodology is a structured framework that outlines how work should be organized, managed, and delivered. It includes specific processes, tools, and techniques to help teams achieve their project goals (Coursera Staff, 2025). Project management methodologies help teams in several ways including defining consistent ways of working and clear roles and responsibilities.

Project management methodologies are typically framed using one of two approaches: traditional and Agile. Whereas a traditional approach follows a linear path with detailed, upfront planning and one major deliverable at the end, Agile follows a more iterative approach with multiple deliverables throughout the process

2.2.5 Project Management Knowledge Areas and Processes

Project Management Knowledge Areas are fields or areas of specialization that are commonly employed when managing projects. A Knowledge Area is a set of processes associated with a particular topic in project management. It is defined as an identified area of project management defined by its knowledge requirements and described in terms of its component processes, practices, inputs, outputs, tools and techniques (Project Management Institute, 2017). There are ten (10) knowledge areas commonly used in projects shown in figure 10 below. The needs of a specific project may require additional Knowledge Areas.

Figure 10 Knowledge Areas of Projects (Source :Project Management Institute, 2017)

Knowledge Area	Description
1. Project Integration Management	Project Integration Management includes the processes and activities to identify, define, combine, unify, and coordinate the various processes and project management activities within the Project Management Process Groups.
2. Project Scope Management	Project Scope Management includes the processes required to ensure that the project includes all the work required, and only the work required, to complete the project successfully.
3. Project Schedule Management	Project Schedule Management includes the processes required to manage the timely completion of the project.
4. Project Cost Management	Project Cost Management includes the processes involved in planning, estimating, budgeting, financing, funding, managing, and controlling costs so the project can be completed within the approved budget.
5. Project Quality Management	Project Quality Management includes the processes for incorporating the organization's quality policy regarding planning, managing, and controlling project and product quality requirements, in order to meet stakeholders' expectations.
6. Project Resource Management	Project Resource Management includes the processes to identify, acquire, and manage the resources needed for the successful completion of the project.
7. Project Communications Management	Project Communications Management includes the processes required to ensure timely and appropriate planning, collection, creation, distribution, storage, retrieval, management, control, monitoring, and ultimate disposition of project information.
8. Project Risk Management	Project Risk Management includes the processes of conducting risk management planning, identification, analysis, response planning, response implementation, and monitoring risk on a project.
9. Project Procurement Management	Project Procurement Management includes the processes necessary to purchase or acquire products, services, or results needed from outside the project team.
10. Project Stakeholder Management	Project Stakeholder Management includes the processes required to identify the people, groups, or organizations that could impact or be impacted by the project, to analyze stakeholder expectations and their impact on the project, and to develop appropriate management strategies for effectively engaging stakeholders in project decisions and execution.

Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (6th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2017.

A project management process is a series of activities directed toward causing and end result where one or more inputs, will be acted upon to create one or more outputs (Project Management Institute, 2017). A Project Management Process Group is a logical group of project management inputs, tools and techniques and outputs to achieve specific project objectives. The PMI recognizes 5 project management process groups employed to meet project objectives, see figure 11. These 5 Process Groups are independent of the application areas or industry focus. Process Groups are not project phases and for projects divided into phases, the processes in the Process Groups interact within each phase. Furthermore, it is possible that all Process Groups could be represented within a phase. Individual processes in the Process Groups are often iterated prior to completing a phase or a project. The number of process iterations and interactions between processes varies based on the needs of the project. The project management process groups include Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring and Controlling, and Closing (Project Management Institute, 2017). Figure 11 shows the project management groups mapped to the knowledge areas. The project management process groups are described below:

- Initiating Process Group - Those processes performed to define a new project or a new phase of an existing project by obtaining authorization to start the project or phase. In the context of the FGP this would include the development of the project Charter.
- Planning Process Group - Those processes required to establish the scope of the project, refine the objectives, and define the course of action required to attain the objectives that the project was undertaken to achieve. In the context of the FGP this includes the identification of the focus of the work and its components.
- Executing Process Group - Those processes performed to complete the work defined in the project management plan to satisfy the project requirements. In the context of

the FGP this would entail assessments through surveys and interviews to gather the results.

- Monitoring and Controlling Process Group - processes required to track, review, and regulate the progress and performance of the project; identify any areas in which changes to the plan are required; and initiate the corresponding changes. Monitoring and controlling under the FGP is undertaken by the facilitator of the Graduation seminar and the assigned tutor.
- Closing Process Group - Those processes performed to formally complete or close the project, phase, or contract. In the context of the FGP this entails the approval and the successful end of the project assignment after presentation to the Board of Examiners.

Figure 11 Project Management Process Groups and Knowledge Areas Mapping (Source: Project Management Institute, 2017)

Knowledge Areas	Project Management Process Groups				
	Initiating Process Group	Planning Process Group	Executing Process Group	Monitoring and Controlling Process Group	Closing Process Group
4. Project Integration Management	4.1 Develop Project Charter	4.2 Develop Project Management Plan	4.3 Direct and Manage Project Work 4.4 Manage Project Knowledge	4.5 Monitor and Control Project Work 4.6 Perform Integrated Change Control	4.7 Close Project or Phase
5. Project Scope Management		5.1 Plan Scope Management 5.2 Collect Requirements 5.3 Define Scope 5.4 Create WBS		5.5 Validate Scope 5.6 Control Scope	
6. Project Schedule Management		6.1 Plan Schedule Management 6.2 Define Activities 6.3 Sequence Activities 6.4 Estimate Activity Durations 6.5 Develop Schedule		6.6 Control Schedule	
7. Project Cost Management		7.1 Plan Cost Management 7.2 Estimate Costs 7.3 Determine Budget		7.4 Control Costs	
8. Project Quality Management		8.1 Plan Quality Management	8.2 Manage Quality	8.3 Control Quality	
9. Project Resource Management		9.1 Plan Resource Management 9.2 Estimate Activity Resources	9.3 Acquire Resources 9.4 Develop Team 9.5 Manage Team	9.6 Control Resources	
10. Project Communications Management		10.1 Plan Communications Management	10.2 Manage Communications	10.3 Monitor Communications	
11. Project Risk Management		11.1 Plan Risk Management 11.2 Identify Risks 11.3 Perform Qualitative Risk Analysis 11.4 Perform Quantitative Risk Analysis 11.5 Plan Risk Responses	11.6 Implement Risk Responses	11.7 Monitor Risks	
12. Project Procurement Management		12.1 Plan Procurement Management	12.2 Conduct Procurements	12.3 Control Procurements	
13. Project Stakeholder Management	13.1 Identify Stakeholders	13.2 Plan Stakeholder Engagement	13.3 Manage Stakeholder Engagement	13.4 Monitor Stakeholder Engagement	

Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (6th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2017.

2.2.6 Project Life Cycle

The Project life cycle refers to the series of phases that a Project passes through from its start to its completion. The phases connect the delivery of business and stakeholder value from beginning to end of the Project.

The type and number of Project phases in a Project cycle is dependent on several variables, particularly the delivery cadence and the development approach (Project Management Institute, 2021, p. 42).

Some of the most common phases within a project include:

Feasibility -This phase determines if the business case is valid and if the organization has the capability to deliver the intended outcome.

Design -Planning and analysis lead to the design of a project's deliverable(s).

Build -Construction of the deliverable (s) with integrated quality assurance activities.

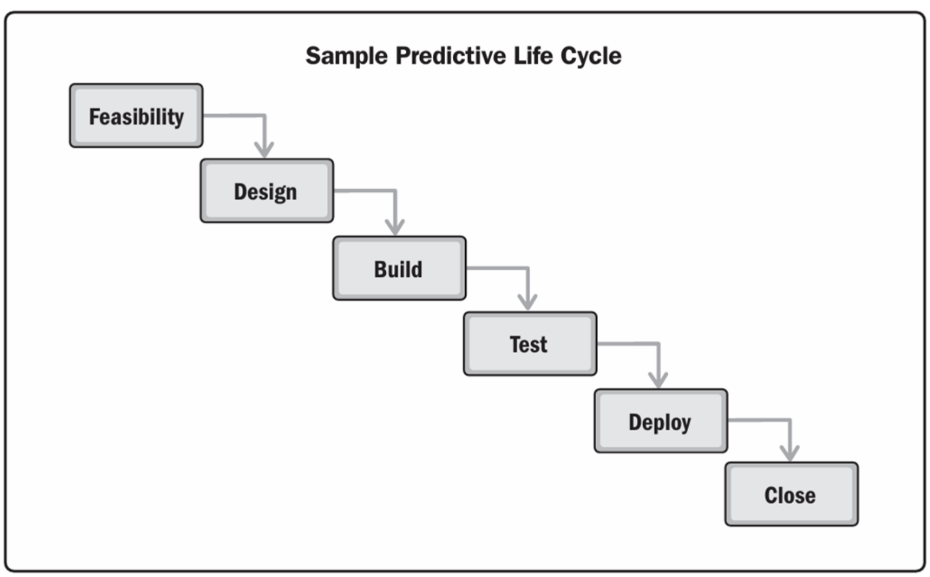
Test -Final quality review and inspection of deliverables are carried out before transition, go-live, or customer acceptance.

Deploy - Project deliverables are put into use and transitional activities required for sustainment, benefits realization, and organisational change management are completed.

Close -The project is closed, project knowledge and artifacts are archived, project team members are released, and contracts are closed.

Predictive project life cycles as shown in figure 11 are characterized by an emphasis on specification of requirements and detailed planning during the beginning phases of a project. For this type of life cycle there are detailed plans based on known requirements and constraints may reduce risk and cost. In addition, milestones for key stakeholder involvement are also planned. Adaptive life cycles are more iterative and embrace change; it is therefore not linear as shown in figure 12 and is flexible and responsive to changes of customers.

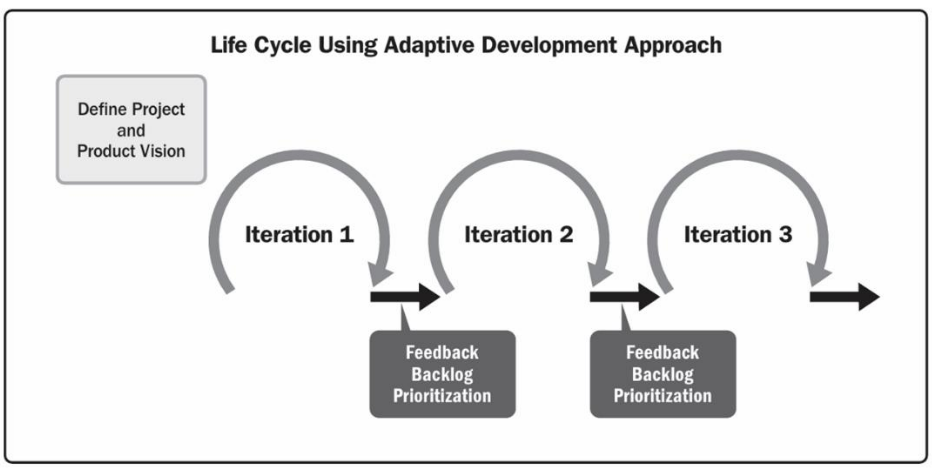
Figure 12 Predictive Life Cycle (Source: Project Management Institute, 2021)



Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

In the adaptive life cycle, the overall scope of a project is broken down into different sets of requirements or sub-projects that will be undertaken individually. During the iteration, the functionalities of the cycle will be discussed, implemented and, finally, reviewed by the customer (Project Management Knowledge, 2023) The adaptive life cycle is appropriate for projects that involve higher levels of complexity and uncertainties as each iteration of this particular project life cycle addresses issues for every task and each task is completed before another task is undertaken.

Figure 13 Adaptive Life Cycle (Source: Project Management Institute, 2021)



Note. Adapted from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (7th ed.), by Project Management Institute, 2021.

2.2.7 Company Strategy, Portfolios, Programs and Projects

The PMI defines a project as a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a product, service or result. Projects can stand alone or be part of a program or portfolio. A program describes related projects, subsidiary programs, and program activities that are managed in a coordinated manner to obtain benefits not available from managing individually. A portfolio refers to projects, programs, subsidiary portfolios, and operations managed as a group to achieve strategic objectives (Project Management Institute, 2021, p. 4).

Many projects are initiated on a business case. Business strategy is the reason for the project, and all the needs are related to the strategy to achieve the value (Project Management Institute, 2021, p.4). Project management plays a critical role in the success of any business and effective project management consists of synchronizing projects with the organization's overall business strategy (Formatech, 2023). A business strategy can be seen as a comprehensive plan and framework that guides a company towards achieving its goals and objectives. It incorporates a set of decisions and actions taken by top management to define the direction, scope, and competitive positioning of the company that serve to guide the day-to-day operations (Folaron, 2023). Business strategy can also be viewed as a complete collection of actions or activities that direct the use of a firm's resources to achieve the vision and goals of the business and provide a long-term competitive advantage (Singh, 2024). An organization’s business strategy involves analyzing internal and external factors, assessing market opportunities, understanding customer needs, and leveraging the organization’s capabilities to gain a competitive advantage. The business strategy also provides a roadmap for allocating resources, making critical business decisions, and adapting to changing market dynamics (Folaron, 2023).

Both business strategy and project management aim to achieve organisational objectives. The business strategy establishes the direction, goals, and long-term plans for an organization, while project management ensures the execution of those plans through the successful completion of projects (Folaron, 2023). It is important that business strategy, as well as its projects, programs and portfolios, are aligned. Projects facilitate the work that carries out the strategic business plans of an organization.

The organization's business strategy as well as its projects both require planning and scope definition to be successful. Both the business strategy and projects also require risk assessment and mitigation. Efficient resource allocation is critical for both strategic implementation and project management and consequently, collaboration between strategy and project management enables organizations to better plan and optimize resource allocation. Successful business strategy and project management both require performance monitoring and evaluation to measure progress and make informed decisions.

Effective project management consists of synchronizing projects with the organization's overall business strategy, ultimately prioritizing projects based on their strategic value to the organization. The alignment of projects with business strategy, can ensure that resources are allocated effectively and that the project contributes to the organization's overall success (Formatech, 2023). Aligning an organization's projects to optimize their contributions to strategic goals does necessitate a highly coordinated effort (Singh, 2024) . A project selection and prioritisation framework guarantees a solid relationship between projects and the strategic strategy. To ensure that corporate projects are linked with corporate strategy there should be a strong commitment to strategic project management.

Ongoing work shows that benefits realisation management (BRM) could help align projects, programmes, and portfolios to an organization's overarching business strategy. BRM can be defined as a collective set of processes and practices for identifying benefits and aligning them with formal strategy, ensuring benefits are realized as project implementation progresses and finishes, and that the benefits are sustainable—and sustained—after project implementation is complete (Project Management Institute, 2016).

The business strategy of the OECS Commission is guided by its five strategic priorities, works across its programmatic areas and in all Member States to consolidate the single economic space for enhanced economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. The strategic objectives are as follows (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, 2023):

- Accelerate Regional Integration- To Facilitate the Establishment of a Functional Economic Union.
- Re-Invent the Economy- To Support the Transformation of our Economies to become Globally Competitive.
- Value the Environment- To Enhance our capacity to leverage Natural Systems for Socio-Economic Development
- Build Resilience- To Enhance our ability to plan, manage, mitigate and respond to disaster and Outbreak

- Advance Equity and Inclusion- To Reduce Disparities in Health, Education and Social Outcomes

The OECS Commission undertakes several projects and programs in support of its business strategy. The sustainable energy programme, for example, currently has two projects, the OECS GEOBUILD project and the Caribbean Efficient and Green -Energy in Buildings project.

The FGP objective is seen as a project as it has a set duration and a set scope.

2.3 Other Applicable Theory/Concepts Related to the Project Topic and Context

2.3 1 Current Situation of the Problem or Opportunity in Study

PMO Status at OECS Commission

The OECS Commission delivers regional projects across its 12 Member States in support of its strategic objectives. The organisation is mainly project-focused with more than 70% of the budget allocated from donor funds (PMO OECS, n.d.). The organisation serves as an executing agency, working with several development partners including the World Bank, The Caribbean Development Bank, the European Union and other private partners. Whilst the Commission has extensive experience with the implementation of projects, there continue to be some challenges to project implementation including the need for project extensions and additional funding for planned projects. Projects have also been impacted by changes to the scope of the project. These challenges arise due to several reasons but underscore the need for efficient management of projects. In light of this, and based on the importance of projects to the Commission and its Member States, a decision was taken to have a Unit dedicated to the project portfolio and a Portfolio Management Office, PMO was established in April 2019 (PMO OECS, n.d.).

The OECS PMO has been mandated to provide oversight to the organisation's portfolio of projects and support Project Management resource allocation on projects. It also required to provide Project Management technical support across the entire project lifecycle to units and project teams (PMO Global Institute , 2023). Additionally, it offers practitioner training and works to improve knowledge and skills on project management in the organisation. There is limited record of other similar functioning PMOs in the Caribbean OECS PMO is thought to be amongst the few operating in the Caribbean. The PMO also reviews and approves projects being conceptualized and designed for intake into the pipeline of the Commission. Since the establishment of the PMO the Commission changes include standardised job descriptions for project managers and the establishment of the PROF, a strategic leadership forum established to review and approve projects. The PMO has also introduced a suite of tools in Smartsheet to be utilised by all projects. These include the project activity listing, risk register, stakeholder register, issues log and lessons learned. The tools are constantly being updated to reflect the needs of projects and the organisation (PMO OECS, n.d.). Staffing at the PMO has fluctuated since its establishment, and currently the PMO has only one member of staff.

Evolution of PMOs

The existing literature shows that the role of the Project Management Office (PMO) has evolved significantly over recent years transforming from a simple project coordination function to a strategic partner that drives organisational success (PMO Global Institute , 2023). This analysis may have significance to this research as it may inform a possible evolutionary pathway for the PMO at the Commission. The historical role of the PMO centered around governance, standardization, and compliance which provided the structures and processes necessary for project teams to deliver within defined parameters. Today, the evolving business landscape driven by digital transformation, customer expectations, and market volatility has led to a transformation of the PMO's role shifting from enforcing rules to becoming a value-driven, strategic entity (Prensa, 2024).

Whilst a PMO is now seen as a critical dimension of an organisation, the formal establishment of PMOs as dedicated entities within organizations is a relatively recent phenomenon. The concept of a PMO emerged as a response to the need for centralized project coordination and control and the early PMOs focused primarily on project coordination, ensuring that various project activities were synchronized and resources were allocated effectively. These early PMOs however, lacked standardization and often operated on an ad hoc basis (PMO Global Institute , 2023). Standardized methodologies are observed as one of the key developments in the evolution of PMOs. The development and implementation of project management frameworks, best practices, and templates by PMOs helped ensure consistency across projects and enabled effective knowledge sharing. This standardization served to improve project outcomes and reduce risks.

The traditional PMO was characterised by Standardization of Processes, Compliance and Reporting, and Centralized Control (Prensa, 2024) The focus was on developing and enforcing uniform project management methodologies across teams and ensuring adherence to timelines, budgets, and scopes through rigorous oversight. However, as PMOs evolved, in addition to project management methodologies, they started taking on broader roles and responsibilities within organizations including strategic planning, providing guidance on project selection and prioritisation based on their understanding of organisational goals. Responsibilities in portfolio management, overseeing the entire project portfolio and ensuring alignment with business objectives also became part of the PMO function (PMO Global Institute , 2023).

The recognition of the strategic value of effective project management to organizations led to the evolution of the role of PMOs from being merely project coordinators to strategic partners that aligned projects with organisational objectives. This shift was largely fuelled by the increasing complexity of projects and the need for a systematic approach to project management (PMO Global Institute , 2023).

Today the operations of the modern PMO is moving from simply monitoring progress and enforcing rules to a role that aligns project outcomes with organisational strategy, adapts to change, and delivers measurable value (Prensa, 2024). As a strategic business partner a PMO address business process improvements analysing project management processes, identifying bottlenecks, and suggesting improvements to enhance project delivery and efficiency. PMOs can in this way contribute to cost savings and increased productivity (PMO Global Institute , 2023). Another important evolving role of the PMO is that of Portfolio management and governance. PMOs can establish robust governance structures, define project selection criteria, and monitor project performance.

The key trends in PMO transformation include Customer-Centricity, Outcome-Oriented Metrics, Agility and Adaptability and Innovation as a Core Function. With regard to Innovation, PMOs are encouraging cross-functional collaboration, piloting disruptive ideas, and leveraging emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning. In terms of outcomes PMOs instead of measuring success purely by outputs like "projects completed on time," modern PMOs evaluate outcomes such as increased market share, customer satisfaction, or enhanced operational efficiency. Furthermore, the new PMOs are embracing agile principles that allow for swift responses to changing priorities. The adoption of iterative planning and adaptive resource allocation are also paramount. Hence PMOs are moving from control to collaboration, from bureaucracy to agility and from oversights to insights (Prensa, 2024) .

Ongoing work in the field suggests that organizations continue to evolve; PMOs will need to adapt and innovate through continuous improvement of their processes, embracing emerging trends, and overcoming challenges. The challenges for PMOs include resistance to change and resource constraints (PMO Global Institute , 2023) . The role of PMOs will continue to evolve but the PMO remains essential for successful project delivery and organisational success.

2.3.2 Previous Research Done for the Topic in the Study

The acronym, "PMO" refers to a portfolio, program or project office. The PMO is defined as a management structure that standardizes the project-related governance processes and facilitates the sharing of resources, methodologies, tools, and techniques (Project Management Institute, 2021) One of the core reasons for establishing a PMO is improved project management in terms of schedule, cost, quality, risks and other facets. A PMO is responsible for improving and optimizing the processes used in projects, programs, and portfolios, directly impacting their management practices and results (Varajão, Lopes, & Tenera, 2025)

A PMO can monitor and control project deliverables, effectively manage scope creep, and ensure proper project planning, organizing, staffing, monitoring, and closing. Therefore, the establishment of a PMO is highly imperative and essential for achieving the strategic goals of the organization (Menon, 2024). PMOs support project managers through, ***inter alia***, managing shared resources, identifying and developing project management methodologies, coaching, mentoring, training, and oversight. The PMO also monitors compliance with project management standards and practices. PMOs make use of key performance indicators (KPIs)and critical success factors to improve project success rates. In supporting value delivery, PMOs, are expected to make three key contributions (Project Management Institute, 2021) :

- Fostering delivery and outcomes-oriented capabilities

- Keeping the big picture perspective
- Continuous improvement, knowledge transfer, and change management

Main Types of PMO

The type of PMO established is based on the needs of the organisation that it is intended to serve and influenced by the types of projects being delivered, the size of the organisation, its structures, the degree if centralized/decentralized decision-making and corporate culture. Furthermore, as the needs of the organization changes over time, the PMO is expected to evolve accordingly (Project Management Institute, 2021).

A review of existing literature indicates several typologies and types of PMO with varying functions. A recent study by Monteiro, for example recognised 16 typologies and 60 PMO types in the literature, showing that PMOs are complex and evolving entities that can assume various forms and organisational responsibilities (Monteiro, Varajão, & Santos, 2024) The Project Management Institute identifies three main types of PMOs (Pandey, 2025).

1. Supportive PMO- provides guidance, templates, best practices, and tools for managing projects acts more like a consultant or advisor, offering resources and advice but with little authority over the projects. This type of PMO has a low level of control and mainly provides

support and shares project management knowledge without directly managing or controlling projects (Pandey, 2025).

2. Controlling PMO- ensures that project management standards, processes, and tools are followed and may monitor project performance and require regular updates. This PMO has a moderate level of control and ensures compliance with established methodologies and project management standards (Pandey, 2025).

3. Directive PMO-has the highest level of control. This PMO not only sets the standards but also directly manages projects. The PMO may assign project managers and be responsible for project execution, ensuring that projects are aligned with organisational strategy. Project managers' report to the PMO and the office has significant authority over the project's direction (Pandey, 2025).

Other types of PMOs that are significant in the context of this project include:

- Hybrid PMO-combines elements of supportive, controlling, and directive PMOs to suit the organisation's needs. This PMO is ideal for diverse project management requirements and provides comprehensive support and governance (McPherson, 2024). A hybrid PMO combines elements of different PMO types based on the specific needs and context of the organization and offers a more flexible approach to project management (Project Management Institute, 2025).

- Centre of Excellence (CoE) focuses on enhancing project management capabilities and fostering continuous improvement. This PMO provides advanced training and conducts research, thereby addressing stagnation and lack of innovation in project execution (McPherson, 2024).

- Portfolio Management Office- oversees all projects and programmes to ensure they align with the organisation's strategic goals. This PMO prioritises projects and managing resources effectively, to address misalignment and resource allocation issues (McPherson, 2024).

- Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO)-operates at a strategic level, overseeing all project, programme, and portfolio activities to ensure alignment with the organisation's overarching goals. This PMO provides a centralised, strategic focus to address challenges related to misalignment and ensures resources are optimised across all initiatives (McPherson, 2024). An EPMO is a high-level PMO with a broad scope and authority within the organization (Project Management Institute, 2025)

- Strategic PMO.

  The strategic PMO focuses on aligning the organization's portfolios, programs, and projects with its strategic objectives and ensuring that they deliver value. The strategic PMO involves project prioritisation, resource allocation, benefits realization, and governance. A strategic PMO typically has a high level of authority within the organization and works closely with senior management to ensure that the organization’s project portfolio is effectively managed (Project Management Institute, 2025)

PMOs and Best Practices

A poorly managed PMO may become a bureaucratic organization, involving more paperwork and increased costs for the organization. However, an effective PMO with sufficient organisational authority can improve stakeholder expectations and manage change within the organization (Menon, 2024). Ongoing research shows that there are many success factors linked to the PMO, always varying according to the perspective observed and initial characteristics and objectives defined in PMO implementation. PMOs still have a high failure rate and there are few empirical studies dedicated to understanding challenges related to PMO implementation, as well as the proposal of alternatives to overcome those challenges (Pinto, Mello, & Spiegel, 2019)

A recent analysis shows that, generally PMOs are structurally configured in a particular way to adapt to the peculiarities of each organization and its strategic objectives, in order to promote project management practices (Pinto, Mello, & Spiegel, 2019). Furthermore, the study suggests that due to the variability in PMO characteristics and its host organizations, it is hardly plausible to establish “best practices” or such different structures, with such peculiar objectives. Further academic studies are needed for the establishment of these “best practices”, for PMO (Pinto, Mello, & Spiegel, 2019). Some authors still maintain that by examining the best practices, processes, and methodologies, PMO can define its own best practices suitable for the organization and leverage them to ensure the successful delivery of projects (Menon, 2024). A significant point to note is that

PMOs face significant challenges in clearly defining their roles and responsibilities as there are several functions for selection.

2.3.3 Other Theories Related to the Topic in the Study

Sustainable projects

The concept of "sustainable projects" is an important related one for this research as the OECS Commission has an interest in designing and delivering sustainable projects for the improvement in the quality of life for the people of the OECS. Sustainable projects can be defined as those that not only achieve their immediate goals but also leave a positive legacy by enhancing the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. These projects have a focus which extends beyond value creation to include the regeneration and restoration of natural, social, and economic systems (GPM Global, 2024). These projects do not only incorporate social, environmental and economic considerations but seek to mitigate negative impacts and to actively contribute to the renewal and enhancement of ecosystems, communities, and economies. Sustainable projects aim to not merely minimize negative environmental, social, and economic impacts but where possible, seek to minimize them. In addition to the business case, sustainable projects simultaneously support the regeneration of natural resources, fostering social equity, and contributing to a resilient and thriving economy.

Organisational Maturity Levels

The maturity of the organization is an important concept when addressing the work of PMOs and deciding on the right type of PMO for an organization. The maturity of an organization is a measure of its ability to adapt to the environment, to learn, to improve results and economic and/or social performance. Organization maturity is a consequence of the organization's knowledge, learning experience and growth. The more advanced the maturity, the higher the results in general, and the less chance that incidents or errors will lead to losses in the quality or use of resources (Guell, 2020). The operational maturity refers to an organization's level of development, competence, and efficiency in achieving goals and optimizing operations. Assessing operational maturity involves defining objectives, selecting a model or framework, collecting data, analyzing current practices, identifying gaps, defining an improvement plan, implementing improvements, and maintaining the effort (de Oliveira, 2023).

A Project Management Office (PMO) Maturity Model can be viewed as a structured framework that organizations use to evaluate and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their PMOs. By identifying current capabilities and highlighting improvement opportunities, organizations can systematically advance their project management practices to support strategic goals and deliver superior results. PMO Maturity Models provide a clear roadmap for assessing, refining, and evolving PMO practices (Jorge, 2025).

Intergovernmental Organization

The concept of intergovernmental organization (IGO) is important to this study as OECS is an IGO and this has implications on how the OECS Commission conducts business including the management of its projects. An IGO is an entity created by treaty, involving two or more nations, to work in good faith, on issues of common interest. IGOs that are formed by treaties are more advantageous than a mere grouping of nations because they are subject to international law and have the ability to enter into enforceable agreements among themselves or with states (Harvard Law School, 2022).

Regional Integration

Regional integration is an economic concept driving cooperation between neighbouring countries which is fundamental to the OECS and consequently this research project. Regional integration involves countries within a specific region coming together to form an alliance or a union, with the aim of achieving shared economic, political, and social goals. These collaborations often involve agreements to reduce tariffs, create common markets, and align policies to facilitate smoother interactions between member states (PolSci Institute, 2023).Regional integration goes beyond simple trade agreements, fostering a deeper level of collaboration that can significantly impact a region's economic landscape (Nasrudin, 2025). Several factors influence countries towards regional integration, but these can be broadly categorised as shared challenges and external influences. For example, neighbouring countries, like the OECS Member States, often face similar economic and social concerns which can be addressed collaboratively. Countries with similar cultural backgrounds may find it easier to harmonize regulations and business practices, facilitating a smoother integration process (Nasrudin, 2025). Regional integration is a key focus of many of the projects implemented at the OECS Commission and so the PMO should put measures to ensure that this goal is achieved through projects.

The theoretical concepts discussed above provide the conceptual foundation for the research methodology used in this study. In particular, the principles of project management and maturity concepts guide the design of the survey instrument and the analytical approach. These theoretical perspectives guide the assessment of the OECs Commission’s PMO maturity and effectivess. The following chapter outlines the methodological framework used to operationalise these concepts through the selection of information sources, research methods, tools and analytical procedures.

3 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The methodological framework below provides structured practical guidance to how the research project will be conducted for ease of implementation and understanding of the logic. It provides a step-by-step approach for addressing the four specific objectives of the research. It addresses the information sources, research methods, tools, assumptions, constraints, and deliverables of the research project.

3.1 Information Sources

Information can be defined as the combination of data, which has been taken through the processing and organizing steps to be simplified and given intended significance leading it to be made applicable to decision-making and problem-solving. Sources of information refer to the means (e.g primary sources, secondary sources) through which data and knowledge are obtained (GeeksforGeeks, 2024). Information sources are essentially the places, people, or things from which information is gathered which could be physical or digital documents, institutions, organizations, or even individuals. (LIS Academy, 2014). Chart 1 shows the information sources used in this research study.

3.1.1 Primary Sources

A primary source of information is an original source, presenting new research results (Arcada University of Applied Sciences, 2025). In a primary source, information is published for the first time (Metropolia, 2025). Primary sources of information refer to records of events or evidence as they are first described or happened without any interpretation or commentary. This is information that is shown for the first time or original materials on which other research is based. Primary sources display original thinking, report on new discoveries, or share fresh information (University of Minnesota, Crookston, 2025). Primary sources can include theses, dissertations, scholarly journal articles (research based), some government reports, symposia and conference proceedings, original artwork, poems, photographs, speeches, letters, memos, personal narratives, diaries, interviews, autobiographies, and correspondence. Primary sources allow researchers direct access to original ideas, events, and data. The primary sources to be used in this research include organisational reports, personal narratives, interviews, and surveys.

3.1.2 Secondary Sources

A secondary source is a piece of information that interprets one or more primary sources. Secondary sources offer an analysis or restatement of primary sources and often try to describe or explain primary sources (University of Minnesota, Crookston, 2025). Secondary sources tend to be works which summarize, interpret, reorganize, or otherwise provide an added value to a primary source. Secondary sources include textbooks, edited works, books and articles that interpret, or review research works, histories, biographies, literary criticism and interpretation, reviews of law and legislation, political analyses and commentaries. The secondary sources to be used in this research include books, articles in journals and online sources.

3.1.2.1.1

Chart 1 Information Sources (Author, 2025)

Objectives	**Information sources**	
	Primary	**Secondary**
1. To assess the maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission and the evolving global project environment to confirm the required type of PMO, its functions, placement and staffing.	Interviews with project staff at the Commission, Review of projects documentation, review of organisational decisions and priorities	Books, articles and online literature on organisational maturity
2. To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs.	Surveys and Interviews with projects managers. Divisional heads, programme director, project staff, PMO documents	Website research on PMOs, Project management papers and templates. Best practices, case studies on PMO
3. To develop an implementation plan and appropriate KPIs for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development.	Interview with Project managers, Project Management Office, Beneficiary country Project focal points	Website research on PMOs, Project management papers and templates. Best practices, case studies on PMO
4. To develop a stakeholder and communication management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.	Interview with PMO staff, Project Teams, Beneficiary country Project focal points	Website research on PMOs, Communication plans and stakeholder management plans. Best practices, case studies on PMO

3.2 Research Methods

Research methods can be defined as systematic strategies used to collect, analyze, and interpret data to answer research questions or test hypotheses. They provide a structured approach to investigating phenomena, ensuring that findings are valid, reliable, and reproducible (Zarei, 2025). Research methods are the techniques, tools, and procedures used to collect, analyze, and interpret data for a study providing a systematic approach to solving research questions, ensuring that findings are accurate, reliable, and relevant. The appropriate use of research method is crucial for the success of any project, as it determines how data is gathered and interpreted (Muhammad, 2024). Research methods serve as a framework for researchers to explore questions, test hypotheses, and draw conclusions based on evidence. The significance of research methods lies in their ability to provide reliable and valid findings that can inform decisions and contribute to knowledge (Anderson, 2024).

The existing literature on research methods presents different categorisations and types. A key distinction is between analytical research and descriptive research. Analytical research interprets and analyzes data to uncover relationships, causes, and influencing factors, providing precise conclusions. It focuses on interpreting data and examining variable interactions. The objectives of analytical research include breaking down data for detailed analysis, providing logical explanations, and identifying variable relationships (IESCO Team, 2024). On the other hand, descriptive research aims to provide a comprehensive and precise description of the phenomenon under study, focusing on data collection without in-depth analysis. Analytical research goes beyond description by analyzing and interpreting phenomena, focusing on understanding causes and influencing factors by examining relationships between variables. It is possible to combine the characteristics of both descriptive and analytical research methods producing a descriptive-analytical method (IESCO Team, 2024). This approach aims to describe phenomena while simultaneously analyzing them giving researchers a greater ability to collect comprehensive data and then analyze it to identify relationships and interactions between variables. The descriptive-analytical would be most appropriate for this research but it requires both accurate data collection and in-depth interpretation.

Analytical research involves different ways of collecting and studying data to understand and draw conclusions about a topic, the following research methods are proposed for the study and are summarized in Chart 2.

3.2.1 Qualitative Analysis: Focuses on understanding meanings, interpretations, and subjective experiences using methods such as thematic analysis, content analysis, and grounded theory (P., 2024).

3.2.2 Case Study Analysis: Looks deeply into a specific case or situation to understand its underlying dynamics, context, and factors that affect outcomes (P., 2024).

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3.2.3 Observational Research: Systematically observes and records behaviors, events, or phenomena in their natural settings to gain insights into real-life behaviors and contexts (P., 2024).

Chart 2 Research Methods (Source: Author, 2025)

Objectives	**Research methods**			
	Qualitative Analysis	Quantitative Analysis	Case study Analysis	Observational Research
1. To assess the maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission and the evolving global project environment to confirm the required type of PMO, its functions, placement and staffing.	This analysis allows for an evaluation of the qualitative aspects of the organization that are assessed against set criteria	Allows for statistical analysis of survey data collected.	Allows examination of case studies of projects in the organization to assess./Maturity examination of other organisations for benchmarking,	This method allows for observance of trends in the priorities of the organisation
2. To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs.	Allows for the conduct of descriptive analysis from key stakeholders on qualitative nature of the PMO.	Allows for statistical assessment of survey results for indication of trends e.g mention of challenges and ratings provided by respondents		Observance of practices of the PMO with regard to procedures, templates and resources.
3. To develop an implementation plan and appropriate KPIs for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development.	Allows for prioritisation of activities as part of the implementation plan. Allows for development of criteria for SMART KPI language.	Allows for estimating timelines and indicative costs related to the implementation plan.	Allows for the identification of applicable best practices.	Allows for the observance of organisational cultural practices that can inform the development of implementation plan by highlights norms and customs.
4. To develop a stakeholder and communication management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.	Allows for qualitative description of proposals for the stakeholder and communication plans.	Allows for empirical data to support recommendations for proposed actions in the communication and stakeholder management plans. Allows for indicative cost analysis.	Allows for transferable lessons learnt from successful case studies.	Allows for the development of recommendations based on organisational context based on observance of practices and norms.

3.2.4 Quantitative Analysis: Uses numerical data to find relationships, trends, and patterns through statistical methods like regression analysis, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing (P., 2024) .

3.3 Tools

Research tools include any resources, applications, or techniques that augment the research process and turn data into actionable insights (Krish, 2024) . Tools refer to the instruments, software, methodologies, and approaches utilized to collect, analyze, and interpret data during the research process. They enable researchers to gain insights, validate hypotheses, and make evidence-based decisions. Examples of research tools include surveys, interviews, data analysis software, and specialized instruments designed for specific research domains (Funky, 2023). Tools vary in function and can be used at different stages of research.

Chart 3 Tools (Source: Author, 2025)

Objectives	**Tools**
1. To assess the maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission and the evolving global project environment to confirm the required type of PMO, its functions, placement and staffing.	Semi Structured Interviews Questionnaires via google Document analysis Project Management Maturity Model
2. To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs.	Questionnaires Semi-structured interviews Document analysis
3. To develop an implementation plan and appropriate KPIs for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development.	Expert judgment Semi structured interviews Focus groups with key PMO stakeholders Brainstorming Benchmarking with similar PMO
4. To develop a stakeholder and communication management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.	Expert Judgment Data gathering questionnaires and surveys Stakeholder analysis Stakeholder maps Power /influence grid Stakeholder engagement assessment matrix Meetings Communication requirements analysis

3.4 Assumptions and Constraints

The PMI defines an assumption as a factor that is considered to be true, real, or certain, without proof or demonstration (Project Management Institute, 2021) Assumptions can also be defined as premises or condition, statements or beliefs that are accepted as true, without proof, and form the basis of further planning or action and help guide decision-making in projects (Davis, 2023). An assumption in project management can be viewed as an event or circumstance that one expects to happen over the life cycle of the project based on an educated guess (Malsam, 2025).

The assumptions in a project provide a basis for planning, risk management, stakeholder alignment, scope definition, resource allocation, and project performance measurement (Davis, 2023). It is important to know the assumptions in a project to minimize their impact. It is also important to note that project assumptions allow projects to move forward in uncertainty (Malsam, 2025)

The PMI defines a constraint as a limiting factor that affects the execution of a project, program, portfolio, or process (Project Management Institute, 2021). Project constraints can also be defined as the limitations or restrictions that influence how a project can be planned, executed, and delivered. Common project constraints can include time, cost, scope, quality, resources, and risk (Thom, 2025).Project constraints can also be explained as the boundaries that define what is possible in a project by determining what can realistically be completed within the available resources and schedule. Constraints also shape project success by guiding how goals are prioritized and achieved (Thom, 2025). The main assumptions and constraints of the research are shown in Chart 4.

Chart 4 Assumptions and Constraints (Source: Author, 2025)

Objectives	Assumptions	Constraints
1.To assess the maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission and the evolving global project environment to confirm the required type of PMO, its functions, placement and staffing.	Data and information is in a form that can be used for the maturity assessment. The staff is capable of completing the maturity assessment efficiently. Existing maturity models can be applied to the OECS without major challenges.	Availability and completeness of past project data may be limited Data is scattered in various locations.
2.To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs.	Indicate assumptions applicable for this objective. Stakeholders are prepared to speak openly and express their opinions clearly. Persons are well informed of the work of the PMO. Existing literature and case studies reviewed will provide clear and relevant information to support assessment.	There is limited documentation of the PMO operations. Persons have varying expectations of the role of a PMO.
3.To develop an implementation plan and appropriate KPIs for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development.	The information gathered will be adequate to inform the development of the implementation plan and to identify the KPIs.	The small sample size for persons interviewed limits ideas and presents a homogenous or similar thinking. There is limited opportunity to test aspects of the implementation plan.
4.To develop a stakeholder and communication management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.	Communication personnel at the Commission are also interested in supporting. The Commission has ready access to appropriate communication channels, personnel and equipment and facilities. All stakeholders are identified easily and have interest in the PMO.	All stakeholders will not have the same level of accessibility. In person engagement of stakeholders is limited.

3.5 Deliverables

The PMI defines a deliverable as any unique and verifiable product, result or capability to perform a service that is required to be produced to complete a process, phase, or project (Project Management Institute, 2021). A project deliverable can also be defined as any tangible or intangible output produced as a result of project work that can be verified and measured. A deliverable can be viewed as the concrete proof that work has been completed successfully (Landsmann, 2021). Deliverables refer to the specific outputs, results, or products that a project generates and could be physical goods, documents, reports, software, or any other end result that meets the project objectives (M, 2023). Deliverables can be provided to stakeholders during or at the completion of a project and act as checkpoints, ensuring that the project progresses as planned and ensuring that project goals and requirements are met. Chart 5 shows the deliverables under the research project.

Chart 5 Deliverables (Source: Author, 2025)

Objectives	Deliverables
1. To assess the maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission and the evolving global project environment to confirm the required type of PMO, its functions, placement and staffing.	A report that summarises the results of the assessment of the level of maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission.
2. To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs.	A report of the assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the OECS Commission highlighting key successes and áreas of shortcoming.
3. To develop an implementation plan and appropriate KPIs for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development.	An implementation plan (roadmap) outlining key milestones and SMART actions that enhance the OECS PMO's capacity to support the Commission undertaking environmental sustainability projects. An associated monitoring framework with appropriate KPIs for measuring success.
4. To develop a stakeholder and communication management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.	A communication management plan for the OECS PMO. A stakeholder management plan for the OECS PMO including stakeholder registry and stakeholder engagement plan.

3.6 Maturity Assessment Framework Used

The PMO maturity assessment instrument used in the research paper was based on the Project Management Institute's Organisational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3). The assessment was undertaken with the aid of a 40-question survey instrument which focused on the PMI maturity principles. The dimensions considered were governance, processes, performance, capability, stakeholder engagement, and organisational effectiveness. The research findings indicated a maturity score of 3.06 for the OECS Commission associated with early "Measured" level, where processes are defined but not fully leveraged for control and strategic decision-making. The maturity assessment undertaken directly informed the proposed PMO structure by identifying gaps in governance authority, stakeholder engagement, and capability, and shaped the phased implementation roadmap for the PMO by sequencing improvements recommended. The assessment results also ensured the recommendations were suited to the organisation's maturity level. The proposed roadmap is set to take the OECS Commission PMO from a process of foundational capacity building to governance control and ultimately continuous improvement. The proposed roadmap mirrors progression along the maturity levels defined by the PMI OPM3 framework.

3.7 Research Measures Undertaken to Ensure Methodological Rigor

The research sought to strengthen the credibility, reliability, and validity of findings derived from surveys and interview by ensuring that the survey and interview instruments were explicitly linked to an established theoretical or professional framework. A summary of the measures to ensure methodological rigor is shown in Chart 6. In this study, alignment with PMI's Organizational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3) provides conceptual grounding and ensures that questions measure recognised dimensions of PMO maturity rather than subjective opinions.

The questions used in the survey were very structured and designed to directly measure governance, capability, performance, stakeholder engagement, and effectiveness according to the perception of the respondents. The questions used in the maturity assessment survey were short, an easy to understand, focussed and not ambiguous. The survey was reviewed by the academic supervisor and pre-tested to ensure ease of administration.

Given that the sample size is small, efforts were made to mitigate bias through ensuring diversity of roles. Hence the respondents included 4 project managers, 1programme directors and 3 technical specialists on projects and 1 PMO staff. The research did clearly acknowledge the limitations of the assessment.

The research took steps to ensure standardisation and consistency of data collection procedures. This was important to reduce bias which could negative impact the reliability of the results. Standardisation with respect to the maturity assessment survey was realised by the provision of the same instructions for all respondents and the use of standardized rating scales across all 40 questions. With respect to the interviews, the survey ensured the use of a structured interview protocol, and core questions consistently across participants. Anonymity was promoted in presenting the findings of the survey and the longer interviews were documented to ensure accuracy.

Consistency and reliability checks were also undertaken for both the survey and the interviews. With respect to the survey, responses across related questions were compared and double checked. Where there were missing data, outliers or inconsistencies, these were investigated and if needed amendments based on the feedback of the respondents were conducted. Coding frameworks to ensure themes are applied consistently were used for the interviews.

The research also undertook some level of data triangulation to validate the information from multiple sources. This included cross-checking the perceptions and responses from the survey and interviews against organisational PMO documents and records. The qualitative analysis was also compared against the resulting maturity scores. The survey results were also compared with the interview themes.

The data analysis of the survey results was transparently explained including how the maturity averages were arrived at and how the dimension scores were allocated. The qualitative analysis made use of thematic analysis and grouping of responses. Where necessary verbatim examples were used selectively to support findings.

Chart 6 Summary of Measures for Methodological Rigor (Source: Author, 2025)

Research Quality Criterion	Actions Taken in This Study
Validity	Survey instrument aligned with PMI OPM3 maturity dimensions; questions mapped to governance, performance, capability, stakeholder engagement, and effectiveness; expert review conducted prior to mass administration
Reliability	Standardized survey instrument used; consistent rating scales applied; structured interview protocol followed; data checked for internal consistency across related questions.
Credibility	Triangulation of survey data, interview insights, and documentary evidence; inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative analysis;
Triangulation	Combination of survey results, interviews, document review, and maturity scoring; cross-verification of qualitative themes with quantitative maturity scores.
Transparency	Explicit description of survey instrument, scoring method, maturity levels, and thematic coding process; limitations acknowledged
Transferability	Use of internationally recognized PMI OPM3 framework; structured maturity dimensions relevant to public-sector and intergovernmental organizations.
Bias Mitigation	Anonymous survey responses encouraged; small sample limitations acknowledged; objective maturity scoring applied.

4 RESULTS

4.1 PMO Maturity Assessment

The following discussion presents the results of maturity assesment of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission conducted to confirm the appropriate type of PMO, including its functions, placement and staffing.

4.1.1 PMO Maturity Assessment Approach

This section summarizes the results of the PMO maturity assessment conducted across the OECS Commission using a 40-question instrument. The questionnaire was short in length compared to most maturity assessment frameworks but it was important to develop a questionnaire that would capture the key areas of project management without being too long. The assessment evaluated the maturity of the PMO across governance, processes, performance, capability, engagement, and effectiveness, and the results can be used to inform priorities for strengthening project, programme, and portfolio delivery.

The PMO maturity assessment survey instrument used in this study is based on internationally recognized project management maturity principles developed by the Project Management Institute. The framework used provides a multi-dimensional view of organisational project management maturity, which is consistent with the PMI's Organizational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3) and related standards. The Organizational Project Management Maturity Model defines organisational maturity as the degree to which project, programme, and portfolio management practices are systematically aligned with strategic objectives and embedded within governance, processes, people, and performance systems ((Project Management Institute, 2013).

This framework was chosen because it is very appropriate for public-sector and intergovernmental organizations, such as the OECS Commission. The framework incorporates dimensions applicable to the public-sector context, including governance, stakeholder engagement, accountability, and capacity constraints. These dimensions are critical determinants of project management effectiveness in complex, multi-stakeholder and publicly accountable environments such as the OECS Commission. The assessment provides a balanced and solid basis for diagnosing PMO maturity and identifying targeted improvement actions for the OECS Commission.

The questionnaire comprised 40 questions across 8 dimensions with 5 questions each. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix 4.1. The dimensions assessed are as follows:

1) Governance and Strategic Alignment;

(2) Processes, Standards, and Methodology;

(3) Performance Measurement and Reporting;

(4) Stakeholder Engagement and Communication;

(5) Capability and Capacity Development;

(6) Technology and Tools;

(7) Organisational Culture and Change Readiness; and

(8) Overall PMO Effectiveness.

The survey questionnaire used a likert-type scale to measure the degree of implementation and consistency of PMO practices. This approach to maturity assessment evaluates not only the existence of the project management practices, but also their level of institutionalization, consistency, and impact on performance, as per PMI guidance (Project Management Institute, 2013).

4.1.2 PMO Assessment Respondents

The survey was sent to ten (10) employees at the Commission. Participants included Heads of Units, Programme Managers and Senior Technical Officers who, though did not have the official title of project manager, had served as project managers for small institutional projects. These individuals had also worked alongside the PMO and consequently were well-positioned to respond to the survey.

The response rate of the questionnaire was 80%, with 8 respondents returning the completed questionnaire. The return time varied among respondents, and several reminders and follow-ups were required in some instances. The general feedback received revealed that although the questionnaire required time and thought to complete.

4.1.3 Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

The PMO maturity assessment is based on several key assumptions as follows:

- The respondents possessed sufficient knowledge and experience with the OECS Commission's PMO to provide informed and accurate responses to the questionnaire.
- Respondents interpreted the questions and rating scale consistently and applied them objectively based on observed PMO practices rather than individual expectations or preferences.
- The sample of questions in the questionnaire adequately reflected the core components of PMO maturity as defined by internationally recognized frameworks.
- The assessment assumed that aggregating individual responses provided a reasonable representation of the PMO's overall maturity at the time of the assessment.

Limitations

Before reviewing results, the research recognised that there were some limitations to be considered when interpreting the results of the PMO maturity assessment. The key limitations identified were as follows:

- The assessment relied primarily on the self-reported perceptions of the respondents, which may be influenced by individual roles, experiences, or biases and may not fully capture objective performance outcomes for the organisation.
- The relatively small number of respondents (8) limited the ability to generalize findings across all stakeholders and may have amplified the influence of outlier perspectives. If the sample were bigger results may differ.
- The assessment provided a snapshot in time and did not capture changes in PMO maturity over different project or funding cycles.

4.1.4 Interpretation of the Assessment Results

OPM3 views maturity as a progressive journey, or continuum where organizations evolve from informal and inconsistent practices to fully integrated, continuously improving project management capabilities. There are five (5) levels of maturity as described below in Chart No. 7.: Initial/Ad hoc, Level 1-Standardized, Level 2-Measured, Level 3-Controlled and Level 4- Continuously improved (Project Management Institute, 2013). Average scores are associated with each maturity level and the main characteristics of maturity associated with each level are highlighted.

Chart 7 Maturity Level, Associated Scores and Characteristics (Source: Author, 2025)

Based on Organizational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3), 3rd Ed, Project Management Institute, 2013

Maturity Level	Associated Score	Main Characteristics
Initial / Ad Hoc (Pre-OPM3)	1.0-1.9	Project management practices are informal, inconsistent, and largely dependent on individual effort. A PMO, if present, has limited influence and operates primarily in a reactive or administrative capacity. There is little standardization, minimal governance, and no systematic performance measurement
Level 1: Standardized	2.0-2.9	Defined and documented basic project management processes, methodologies, and roles. A PMO may exist, and common templates and procedures are introduced to bring consistency to how projects are managed. Practices may be applied unevenly across the organization, and success often depends on individual effort rather than institutional discipline. Performance is not yet systematically measured or managed.
Level 2: Measured	3.0-3.9	Organization begins to collect and use performance data to monitor project, programme, and portfolio activities. Standard processes are applied more consistently and reporting mechanisms such as dashboards and KPIs are introduced. PMO plays a stronger role in providing visibility into progress, risks, and resource utilization. Performance is tracked but data is not yet used consistently to control outcomes or drive corrective action across the portfolio.
Level 3: Controlled	4.0-4.5	The organization actively uses performance information to manage delivery and make informed decisions. Governance structures are clearly defined and exercised, escalation mechanisms are in place, and corrective actions are taken when performance deviates from plan. The PMO operates as a strategic enabler, supporting portfolio prioritisation, resource optimization, and benefits realization. project management is fully integrated into organisational decision-making and accountability systems
Level 4: Continuously Improved	4.5-5.0	Organization systematically evaluates and enhances its project management practices based on lessons learned, performance trends, and strategic feedback. Continuous improvement is embedded in the culture, supported by leadership commitment and advanced analytics. PMO functions as a center of excellence, driving innovation, predictive insight, and sustained value delivery. Organizations able to adapt quickly to change while maintaining high levels of performance and strategic alignment

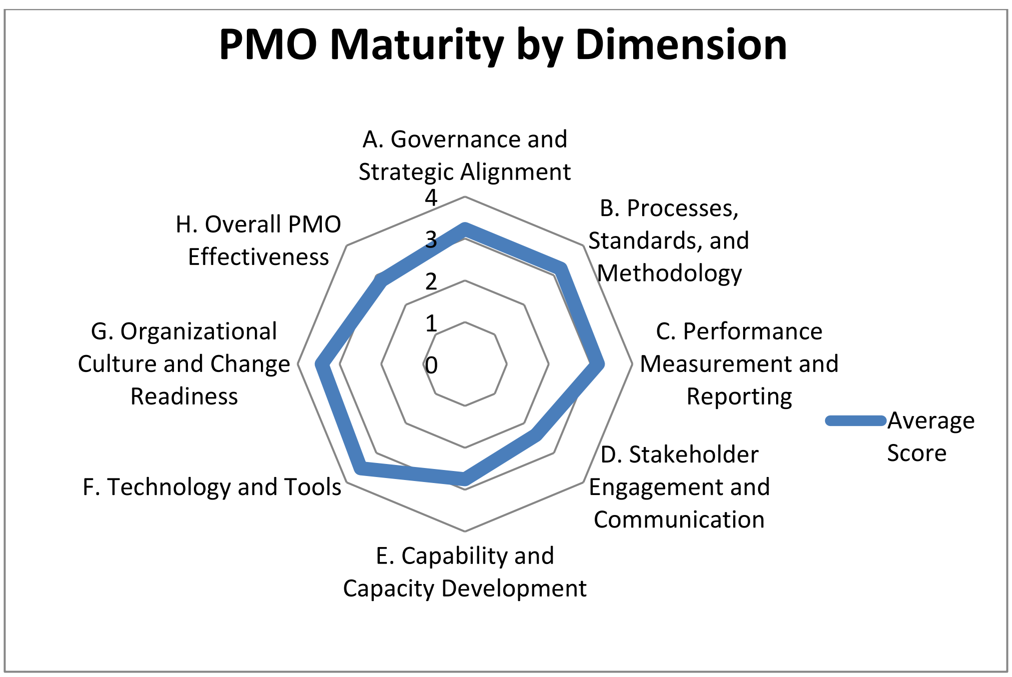
Chart 8 below shows the average scores of the assessed core dimensions of the survey. As can be seen the average scores for the dimensions ranged from 2.4 for Stakeholder Engagement and Communications to 3.5 for Technology and Tools. The full set of results for all the questions are found in Appendix 4. 1. The Overall score obtained for the PMO maturity was 3.06 from a score of 5. According to the PMI, scores in the range of approximately 3.0 to 3.4 are commonly associated with a "Defined" or early "Measured" level of maturity, indicating that formal structures, processes, and tools are in place and generally applied, but are not yet consistently used to control performance or optimize outcomes (Project Management Institute, 2013). At this level, organizations are typically capable of producing reliable project information and following established methodologies, but governance mechanisms, performance data, and stakeholder engagement are not yet fully leveraged for proactive decision-making and portfolio optimization.

Chart 8 Average Scores by Dimensions in Maturity Assessment (Source: Author, 2025)

Maturity Assessment Dimension	Average Score	Interpretation Results
A) Governance and Strategic Alignment	**3.23**	Good but can be strengthened
B) Processes, Standards, and Methodology	**3.23**	Standards exist but application varies
c) Performance Measurement and Reporting	**3.25**	Some reporting but limited performance control
D) Stakeholder Engagement and Communication	**2.4**	Weakest area, unstructured approach to stakeholders
E) Capability and Capacity Development	**2.75**	Capacity is stretched and under-resourced
F) Technology and Tools	**3.5**	Strongest area, strong technology base
G) Organisational Culture and Change Readiness	**3.43**	Overall positive culture exists
H) Overall PMO Effectiveness	**2.7**	PMO value acknowledged but should be enhanced

Figure 14 shows the radar diagram generated from the results of the questionnaire. The radar diagram shows a moderately balanced but uneven maturity profile**.** It does not have any extreme spikes or collapses, which indicates that no single dimension is failing completely.

Figure 14 Radar Diagram Showing PMO Maturity Assessment Results (Source: Author, 2025)



4.1.5 PMO Maturity Assessment Dimensions Analysis

Governance and Strategic Alignment

The first dimension addressed in the PMO maturity Assessment survey is the area of governance and strategic alignment. Assessing governance and strategic alignment is critical in a PMO maturity assessment because it determines whether projects, programmes, and portfolios delivered by the OECS Commission are systematically linked to organisational strategy, decision-making authority, and public value creation. The Project Management Institute emphasizes that organisational project management maturity is achieved when governance structures and leadership practices ensure consistent alignment between strategy and execution (Project Management Institute, 2013). In public-sector and intergovernmental organizations, such as the OECS Commission, effective governance is particularly important to manage cross-institutional accountability, limited resources, and multiple stakeholders, including Member States and development partners. It is important to have strong governance and strategic alignment in such organisations to deliver projects efficiently and realize intended policy outcomes and societal benefits

Examination of the results for this dimension based on the survey respondents shows that the PMO has a recognized mandate, but it may not be fully internalized results also suggest that the organisation has promoted strategic alignment as a concept for project management. It can be inferred that senior management support for the PMO exists, but there is need for enhanced active sponsorship of the PMO. Hence under current conditions the PMO is endorsed at the top, but it does not have governance authority. These inferences can be made because responses acknowledge alignment with OECS strategic objectives, but show lower scores related to clarity of roles and senior leadership championing. These results ultimately suggest that the PMO governance structures may be inadequate to guide prioritisation, escalation, and portfolio-level decision-making.

Maturity Implications

The average score for the Governance and Strategic Alignment dimension from the conducted assessment using the the OPM3 framework was 3.23. This score corresponds to Late Level 1 → Early Level 2 (OPM3) Governance is defined, but not yet consistently used to control or correct portfolio performance.

B. Processes, Standards, and Methodology

The Processes, Standards, and Methodology dimension in a PMO maturity assessment evaluates the extent to which an organization has defined, standardized, and consistently applied project management practices across projects, programmes, and portfolios - a major requirement for project management success. The Project Management Institute emphasizes that standardized methodologies provide a common language, structure, and set of expectations that enable repeatability, comparability, and improved performance across the organization (Project Management Institute, 2021). For organisations such as the OECS Commission, this dimension is particularly important because projects are often implemented across multiple departments and Member States as well as using various funding arrangements. Consistency is therefore required to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance (Project Management Institute, 2017)and this inturn has a direct link to the organisational ability to attract high quality partnerships and funding. Assessing this dimension helps determine whether documented processes are merely available at the Commission or are effectively embedded and applied in practice. If embedded, the PMO is able to support reliable project delivery, effective project management oversight, and continuous improvement.

Based on analysis of the survey responses, the PMO achieved an average score of 3.23 for this dimension. The responses indicate that there are standard methodologies, templates, and procedures for project management at the Commission and these therefore provide a good foundation for the PMO. However, the application of these standards, templates and procedures varies by unit and project. The results suggest that the adoption of project management standards, templates and procedures depends more on individuals than systems at the Commission. Additionally, the organisation currently encourages compliance in this regard but does not enforce it. The inconsistency in adoption of the existing project management standards, templates and procedures could be due to limited institutional knowledge by project staff, personal attitudes and preferences and/or the general lack of enforcement. The survey responses also indicate that lessons learned are captured but not systematically reused. The consideration and use of lessons learned was also very dependent on the individual project manager rather than embedded institutional mechanisms. Respondents in the interviews further indicated that whilst the PMO may review projects proposals, it was not involved in the actual conceptualisation of the projects hence, the recommendation for incorporating lessons learned may not always result in the lessons being fully considered and incorporated into the new projects developed.

Maturity Implications The average score obtained is aligned to OPM3 Level 1 (Standardized).

The average score for the Processes, Standards, and Methodology dimension from the conducted assessment using the the OPM3 framework was 3.23. This score corresponds to Late Level 1 → Early Level 2 (OPM3) This means it is not yet fully Level 2 where processes exist, but measurement of compliance and effectiveness is weak.

C. Performance Measurement and Reporting

The Performance Measurement and Reporting dimension in a PMO maturityassessment examines the extent to which project, programme, and portfolio performance data are systematically defined, collected, analysed, and used to inform decision-making in the organisation. Analysis of the survey responses resulted in an average score of 3.25 for this dimension. Effective performance measurement enables organizations to move beyond activity tracking toward managing outcomes, benefits, and strategic value (Project Management Institute, 2013). In public-sector and intergovernmental organizations such as the OECS Commission, performance measurement is particularly critical due to heightened accountability requirements, donor reporting obligations, and the need to demonstrate value for money and public benefit (Project Management Institute, 2013). Hence, the assessment of this dimension helps determine whether reporting practices are primarily compliance-driven or whether performance information is actively used by leadership to control delivery, manage risks, and optimize the project portfolio in alignment with strategic objectives of the organisation.

The assessment results for this dimension indicate that the PMO is providing regular and timely reporting but suggest that the focus may be more on activities and status than outcomes. The performance reporting at the Commission may be primarily driven by a requirement of donor-funded and politically visible programmes. The survey respondents acknowledged that reporting and KPIs exist at the Commission's PMO and that progress information is regularly shared. However, there were mixed scores on the use of reports for leadership decision-making. The research findings revealed that the reporting does inform leadership sometimes but not consistently. Furthermore, the research revealed that the performance data reported is more descriptive than directive and is not yet consistently used to trigger corrective action, reprioritize investments, or manage portfolio risk. It can therefore be deduced that there is an opportunity for the Commission to enhance reporting for performance intelligence or insight for decision-making.

Maturity Implications

The average score for the Performance Measurement and Reporting dimension from the conducted assessment using the the OPM3 framework was 3.23. The score of 3.25 indicates early OPM3 Level 2 (Measured) suggesting that measurement exists, but data is not yet driving systematic corrective action.

D. Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

The Stakeholder Engagement and Communication dimension score of 2.4 was the lowest received of the dimensions assessed at the Commission. This is an important dimension for assessment as it evaluates the extent to which stakeholders are systematically identified, engaged, informed, and involved throughout the project, programme, and portfolio lifecycle in an organisation. The Project Management Institute emphasizes that effective stakeholder engagement is critical to project success, particularly in complex environments where interests, authority, and accountability are distributed across multiple actors (Project Management Institute, 2021). In public-sector and intergovernmental organizations, stakeholder engagement is especially important due to the presence of diverse stakeholders such as Member States, development partners, implementing agencies, and beneficiaries, each with distinct expectations and decision rights (Project Management Institute, 2017). Assessing this dimension helps determine whether engagement and communication practices are planned, consistent, and responsive, or whether they remain ad hoc and reactive, which can undermine trust, adoption of standards, and the realization of intended public-sector outcomes.

The responses to the survey show that there is some level of stakeholder engagement by the OECS PMO but it most likely informal and reactive. There was no differentiation between internal and external stakeholders in the survey, but it is generally recognised based of the interview with the PMO that there is limited engagement with external stakeholders currently. There is also no consistently applied communication plan for the PMO. These factors may ultimately lead to stakeholders not always understanding the PMO's role and value at the organisation. Based on the results, it is reasonable to infer that there is need to strengthen the feedback mechanisms for the PMO. The reasons for this dimension's low score may be due to reduced capacity in numbers at the PMO and an in-depth evaluation with recommendations will be given is sections 4.2.6.

Maturity Implications

The average score for the Stakeholder Engagement and Communication dimension from the conducted assessment using the the OPM3 framework was 2.4 aligned with OPM3 Level 1 (Standardized). This score signals that this area is weak and stakeholder engagement is not yet institutionalized or measured.

E. Capability and Capacity

The Capability and Capacity Development dimension is another critical area for the OECS Commission as its assessment shows whether an organisation has the appropriate skills, competencies, staffing levels, and professional development mechanisms to support effective project, programme, and portfolio management. Organisational project management maturity depends not only on processes and tools, but also on sustained investment in human capital, including competency frameworks, training, and career pathways (Project Management Institute, 2013). In public-sector and intergovernmental organizations, capacity constraints are common due to competing mandates and limited resources. Furthermore, staff often perform several functions, which can significantly affect delivery performance (Project Management Institute, 2017). Assessing this dimension helps determine whether the PMO is adequately resourced and whether project management capability is institutionalized or dependent on individual expertise.

The responses provide resulted in a dimension average of 2.75 suggesting that project Management skills exist but are uneven. The training provided is limited or inconsistent. Continuous improvement depends on individuals rather than systems.

The general perception is that the PMO is under-resourced. Overall, this question received the lowest scores out of the 40 questions posed. Taken in consideration with the other questions, the limitations identified are more likely due to a structural constraint and not owing to performance failure of the PMO.

Maturity Implications

The average score for the dimension from the conducted assessment using the the OPM3 framework was, 2.75. This corresponds to OPM3 Level 1. This could be the main factor preventing higher maturity in all other dimensions.

F. Technology and Tools

The Technology and Tools dimension received the highest average score of 3.5 indicating that according to the respondents this is the strongest dimension of the PMO. This dimension examines the extent to which standardized systems, platforms, and tools support project planning, monitoring, reporting, and portfolio oversight. Integrated project and portfolio management systems enhance visibility, data consistency, and informed decision-making when aligned with organisational processes and governance structures (Project Management Institute, 2017). In public-sector and intergovernmental organisations, technology plays a critical enabling role by supporting transparency, accountability, and donor reporting across complex and distributed portfolios. Hence, the assessment of this dimension helps determine whether technology is being used at the OECS Commission merely to support reporting requirements or effectively leveraged to generate performance insights and support portfolio-level control and optimization.

The responses received indicate that Project Management tools and repositories and dashboards and systems support reporting at the Commission. Of particular interest is that staff are using the tools fairly consistently. Juxtaposed against the other results, the responses suggests that technology has advanced ahead of people and processes for the PMO. The results also suggest that tools are enabling visibility, but not yet portfolio-level control or prediction.

Technology is an enabler, but its potential is not fully realized because people, processes, and governance are not yet mature enough to use tools for predictive analysis and portfolio control.

Maturity Implications

The average score for the Technology and Tools dimension dimension from the conducted assessment using the the OPM3 framework was 3.5. This score is aligned with OPM3 Level 2 (Measured)-Tools support measurement but not yet control.

G. Organisational Culture and Change Readiness

The Organisational Culture and Change Readiness dimension received the second highest score from the assessment of 3.4. This dimension evaluates the extent to which project management practices are accepted, supported, and embedded within the organization's culture. PMI notes that sustainable maturity requires a culture that values discipline, collaboration, learning, and adaptability, supported by leadership behaviors and organisational norms (Project Management Institute, 2021), In public-sector and intergovernmental organizations, cultural readiness is particularly important because formal authority alone is often insufficient to drive change, and adoption depends heavily on shared understanding and buy-in across diverse stakeholders (Project Management Institute, 2017). Assessing this dimension helps identify whether the organization is prepared to sustain standardized practices and continuous improvement, or whether resistance and siloed behaviors may pose challenges for the effectiveness of the PMO.

The results obtained show a generally positive culture toward project management, collaboration, and innovation but change management practices are not consistently embedded across projects.

Maturity Implications

The average score for the Organisational Culture and Change Readiness dimension from the conducted assessment using the the OPM3 framework was 3.4. This score corresponds to OPM3 Level 2 which describes a situation where culture is enabling maturity but not yet reinforcing it.

H. Overall PMO Effectiveness

The Overall PMO Effectiveness dimension is the final assessment dimension in the questionnaire. This dimension focusses on assessing the extent to which the PMO delivers tangible value by improving coordination, decision-making, and project outcomes across the organization. An effective PMO aligns execution with strategy, enhances performance predictability, and supports leadership through reliable information and governance mechanisms (Project Management Institute, 2013). The research undertakes a more thorough assessment of the effectiveness of the PMO in section 4.2 when addressing Specific Objective 2. This core dimension provides a holistic view of whether the PMO is functioning as a strategic enabler or remains limited to an administrative support role. For public-sector and intergovernmental entities like the OECS Commission, PMO effectiveness is reflected not only in delivery efficiency, but also in improved cross-department collaboration, strengthened accountability, and increased confidence among stakeholders and development partners (Project Management Institute, 2017).

The score for this dimension from the survey was 2.7, and the results indicate that the PMO's value is recognized, but inconsistently. In addition, the PMO impact on project timeliness, quality, and coordination is limited. Overall, the PMO at the Commission is functioning and delivering but there are some limiting factors that should be addressed.

Maturity Implications

The average score for the Overall PMO Effectiveness dimension of 2.7 is aligned with OPM3 Level 1 → Level 2 transition.

Overall Maturity Score

The overall maturity score of the PMO at the Commission is 3.06 out of 5.00. The overall PMO maturity score gives an indication of the general level of institutional development with respect to project management practices and takes into account the average scores for all 40 questions in the survey. This score was interpreted using maturity scaling principles consistent with the Project Management Institute's Organizational Project Management Maturity Model OPM3 and related PMI standards. PMI characterizes organisational project management maturity as a progressive continuum in which organizations evolve from informal or ad hoc practices to standardized and measured practices, and ultimately to controlled and continuously improved performance (Project

Management Institute, 2013). Based on these criteria, the results are consistent with a PMO described as Defined or Early Measured.

4.1.6 Conduct of Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to the administration of the PMO Assessment, semi structured interviews were held to get a fuller appreciation of the operations of the PMO and to help inform the recommendations on the required type of PMO for the OEC Commission, its functions, placement and staffing.

PMO Staff Interviews

An in-depth interview was held with the Head of the PMO to obtain some specific details on the PMO which may not be readily available in documented form.

Relevant Main Takeaways:

- The OECS PMO is one of the few functional PMO for similar type organisations in the region.

- The PMO for the OECS Commission serves the entire organisation.

- There is currently only 1 staff member in the PMO who currently heads the PMO.

- The PMO falls under the Director of Operations Department

- Some recent changes were identified in the structure of the PMO. The previous structure included the individual project managers for the organisation forming part of the PMO structure and reporting to the PMO Head. The project managers now form part of the structure of the thematic departments and units associated with their projects and report to the heads of these departments or units.

Semi-structured Interviews with Selected Project Staff

To supplement the interview with the PMO staff, the 8 respondents participated in a short semi-structured interview. The interviews were conducted in both written and oral form because of time constraints. Five targeted questions formed part of the interviews. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 4.2.

Key Takeaways from the Semi-structured Interviews:

The analysis of the results from the 5 questions is summarised below:

Perception of the type of existing PMO

Most of interviewees, 75%, indicated that the type of the PMO existing at the Commission was a supportive PMO providing advisory services. Only 1 of the 8 respondents felt that the existing PMO at the Comisssion was a Controlling PMO.

Perception of the Most Important Role of the PMO

Generally, the respondents provided responses that could be expected for the role of a PMO but there was noted diversity in choices indicating different expectations and perceptions of the PMO. Some points were repeated such as the need for capacity building, oversight and alignment. The following is the list of points from respondents on the most important role for the PMO.

- Standardization of procedures and processes
- Improve project delivery

- Provision of capacity building in project management
- Support, guidance and coaching to Project Managers
- Project and Portfolio Oversight
- Ensure alignment with the strategic goals of the Organisation
- Collection and dissemination of lessons learned.
- Timely reviews of projects and project implementation to ensure an understanding of risks and challenges
- Facilitate stakeholder communication
- Serve as a central coordinating unit that ensures the effective planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of projects and programmes across the Organisation.
- Provide governance

Views on the Proposed type of PMO

In response to the best-suited type of PMO for the OECS Commission the following responses were obtained:

- 4 or 50% of the 8 respondents recommended a supportive PMO for the OECS Commission.

- 3 or 38% of the 8 respondents recommended a controlling PMO with some authority. These respondents felt that a controlling PMO would facilitate standardization of methodologies, tools, templates across all projects, ensure regular monitoring for the purposes of reporting and decision-making, and ensure consistency.

- 1 out of the 8 respondents recommended a Hybrid PMO– a combination of a controlling and supportive PMO. This respondent proposed that a completely supportive PMO may be considered too weak, and a purely directive PMO would undermine the sovereignty and ownership of the Member States.

Views on PMO Placement in the Organisational Structure

The respondents' views of the current placement of the PMO also varied as follows:

- 4 of the 8 respondents or 50% thought that the current placement of the PMO under the Director Operations was appropriate.
- 2 or 25% of the 8 respondents did not think that the current placement under the Director of Operations was ideal, because they felt that if the PMO was directly under the Director General or Executive Leadership it would be more advantageous for the organisation.
- 25% of the respondents were not sure or did not respond to the question addressing the question on placement of the PMO.

#

4.17 Recommendation for the PMO for the Commission

The PMO maturity assessment and the evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness undertaken as part of this research indicate that the OECS Commission's current PMO operates at a Late Level 1 to Early Level 2 maturity stage under the OPM3 framework .

The findings of the research demonstrate that governance structures and standardized tools are present but are not consistently institutionalized or enforced across the Commission's divisions. The results also indicate that stakeholder engagement and cross-department coordination were key areas requiring strengthening. To determine the most appropriate PMO for OECS Commission, the various PMO typologies were critically evaluated against the organization's maturity level, governance environment, project complexity, and institutional capacity. Ultimately, a shortlist of four potential PMO models were assessed with respect to the OECS Commission: (1) Supportive PMO, (2) Controlling PMO, (3) Directive PMO, and (4) Full Enterprise PMO. Each model was assessed against the OECS Commission's structural and strategic requirements.

The optimum PMO must support strategic portfolio governance while maintaining flexibility appropriate to a public-sector, intergovernmental context.

Rationale for Rejection of Supportive PMO

A Supportive PMO functions as a consultative or advisory body and primarily provides templates, best practices, advisory services, and training support, with minimal enforcement authority. The Supportive PMO model promotes collaboration and may reduce resistance to adoption but it does not meet the needs of the OECS Commission. The maturity assessment of the OECS Commission revealed that the Commission's PMO currently lacks sufficient authority to guide prioritisation and portfolio-level decision-making. In this case, a purely supportive model would not address this problem and might actually perpetuate this weakness. The research survey findings demonstrated uneven application of methodologies across departments at the OECS Commission. The supportive PMO model does not have enforcement capability so adopting such a model would most likely result in the continuation of the project management compliance gaps at the organisation. The research also showed stakeholder engagement was comparatively low at the OECS Commission hence Model, without structured governance reinforcement, like the Support PMO Model, would not adequately address legitimacy and visibility concerns. In summary, a Supportive PMO does not provide the governance strength required to move the OECS Commission beyond early maturity stages.

Rational for the rejection of the Controlling PMO Model

The Controlling PMO is one that enforces standardized methodologies, requires compliance with reporting protocols, and exercises moderate governance authority over project processes. When assessed within the OECS Commission context, the Controlling PMO model addresses several of the key deficiencies of the organisation identified in the assessment. The model promotes methodological consistency, compliance mechanisms and reporting discipline. There are however some limitations to the Controlling PMO which do not make it the most appropriate for the OECS Commission. The model does not sufficiently address portfolio optimization or strategic alignment. Strategic integration is important given that the OECS Commission is also seeking to embrace a sustainability mandate. There is also a risk of bureaucracy which is problematic. The potential for heavy procedural enforcement without strategic partnership could generate resistance in the organisation

Rationale for the Rejection of the Directive PMO Model

A Directive PMO model is characterised by centralized authority and operational control over project execution. The model directly manages projects and assigns project managers. When assessed in the context of the OECS Commission, the Directive PMO has the advantage of providing strong alignment and accountability but presents significant challenges to the organisation. A directive model would require substantial personnel and financial investment which the Commission is not able to facilitate at this time. As indicated the current PMO staffing capacity is limited so the establishment of a directive PMO would be challenge. The centralization associated with the directive PMO could also be a potential challenge due to the risk of over-centralization. The creation of a very centralised directive PMO could undermine divisional autonomy and technical ownership leading to potential conflict between PMO staff and Technical leads for decision making on projects.

Rationale for Rejection of Full Enterprise PMO (EPMO) Model

A Full Enterprise PMO operates at the highest governance level, overseeing projects, programs, and portfolios organization-wide, often with direct executive authority. The EPMO model offers strong strategic alignment and portfolio optimization capacity but the Commission's current OPM3 maturity level of early level 2 suggests that governance mechanisms are not yet sufficiently institutionalized to sustain a fully developed EPMO. Importantly at this time, the OECS Commission does not have the required capacity for an

EPMO. Operation of a full EPMO requires robust analytics capability, multiple specialized staff roles and advanced portfolio systems which the Commission does not have. The transitioning directly to a full EPMO would require significant structural reform for the organisation.

Justification for the Strategic Hybrid Enterprise Model

The OECS Commission operates in a public-sector, intergovernmental environment and is expected to adequately respond to the needs of multi-country stakeholders and donor funded projects. The project environment is increasing in both project volume and diversity. Added to this is the growing need for Sustainability and environmental social safeguard requirements. Based on the findings of the research, the Strategic Hybrid model is proposed for the OECS Commission as it provides a balanced approach that will result in enhanced authority and governance without over-centralization. The strategic hybrid PMO promotes institutional maturity with increased use of process without excessive bureaucracy. This model integrates a) Controlling elements (methodology enforcement and governance oversight), B) Supportive elements (capacity development and coaching) and C) Portfolio-level coordination (alignment with strategic objectives). The PMO should gradually evolve into a light EPMO structure aligned with its strategic priorities of regional integration, resilience, environmental sustainability and public accountability.

The Strategic Hybrid Enterprise-Oriented PMO was selected because it:

- Incorporates governance enforcement (addressing standardization weaknesses)
- Strengthens portfolio-level oversight (addressing strategic alignment gaps)
- Embeds sustainability integration (responding to evolving donor and environmental requirements)
- Maintains divisional autonomy
- Scales gradually with maturity growth
- Aligns with OPM3 progression principles

4.2 PMO Effectiveness and Efficiency

The following discussion provides an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs.

4.2.1 Project Management Needs of the OECS

The OECS commission is supporting its 12 Member States in several areas which require work through projects. These include thematic areas of environment such as Climate and Disaster Resilience, Biodiversity, Oceans Governance and Sustainable Energy. There are also projects being undertaken in key economic, human and social areas such as Agriculture, Fisheries, Trade, Regional Integration, Health and Education. These projects are normally undertaken with other donor partners who often provide funding to undertake the projects on behalf of the Member States. Projects may include several Member States depending on the focus and the financing arrangements.

The OECS Commission may be the only implementer or there may be other co-implementers of a project. Individual projects may be comprised of solely regional sub-components or a mix of regional and national sub-components. Currently, most of the projects focus on just one thematic area but there is a growing trend to have projects which support more than one thematic area. The latter scenario increases the impact of one single project, but this will require greater collaboration and coordination. The OECS Commission is working on strategic interventions to increase its resources mobilisation for projects. For example, the Commission is pursuing Green Climate Fund accreditation and is in the second stage of the approval process (OECS Commission, 2025) . If successful, the expectation is that the number of projects undertaken by the Commission could increase significantly, which would have implications for the workload of the PMO.

4.2.2 Current Functioning of the OECS PMO

To understand the establishment and operations of the PMO for this research an in-depth interview was conducted with the PMO head. The internal platform of the PMO on the OECS intranet also provided some documentation and general information on the PMO functioning. The following are the major relevant facts gathered from these two data sources.

The PMO at the Commission has been termed a ‘Portfolio Management Office’, to take into account the fact that work of the Commission is driven not just through projects but through portfolios (G. Charles, personal communication, October, 01, 2025). According to the PMI, the portfolio management office (Pf-PMO) is responsible for managing the organization’s entire portfolio of programs, projects, and other work. The Pf-PMO oversees the portfolio to ensure alignment with the organization’s strategy, prioritize investments, and optimize resource allocation (Project Management Institute, 2025). The PMI furthers states that with the highest level of authority and strategic focus, the Pf-PMO plays a crucial role in portfolio management and delivery, ensuring that all initiatives support the overall organisational goals.

The OECS Commission PMO carries out the main role of the portfolio management office (Pf-PMO) as defined by the PMI but does not use the PF-PMO abbreviation. The stated mandate of the current OECS PMO is as follows:

- Provide oversight to the organisation’s portfolio of projects
- Support project management resource allocation on projects
- Provide Project Management technical support across the entire project lifecycle to units and project teams

- Offer practitioner training and improve the overall PM IQ across the organization

The current OECS PMO does not have a controlling mandate, but it is empowered to do the following:

1. Review and approve projects being conceptualized and designed for intake into the pipeline and

2. Provide strategic oversight and guidance to the portfolio of projects being implemented by the Commission to increase the likelihood that projects are able to deliver the intended outcomes and impact (OECS PMO, 2019)

The PMO does not write project proposals or concepts nor is it responsible for full management of projects. The review and approval of projects is undertaken though the Project Review Oversight Forum (PROF). The PROF is a strategic leadership forum established to review and approve projects being conceptualized and provide strategic oversight and guidance to the portfolio of projects being implemented by the Commission. The Project Review Oversight Forum (PROF) manages the Project Intake Process by prioritizing highest impact concepts and projects (OECS PMO, 2019).

The PMO facilitates reporting for projects within the portfolio on a monthly basis. The reports submitted by Project Managers can be accessed on the PMO portal and the PMO Dashboard. The PMO Dashboard provides a visualised summary of the performance of the Commission's projects, programs and portfolio. The Project Management Tools used by the PMO include the Activity Listing, Stakeholder Register, Risk Register, Issues Log, Lessons Learned and other tools. The PMO Portal is an intranet site which provides information on all Project Management related activities for the OECS Commission staff.

4.2.3 PMO Efficiency and Effectiveness

PMO efficiency refers to the extent to which a Project Management Office delivers its services, processes, and outputs using the least amount of time, cost, and resources, while maintaining required quality standards. An efficient PMO emphasizes standardized processes, streamlined workflows, appropriate use of tools, and optimal utilization of human and technological resources to reduce duplication and administrative burden (Project Management Institute, 2017). PMI notes that efficiency in project management environments is achieved when processes are repeatable, well-supported by systems, and consistently applied, enabling organizations to deliver outputs with minimal waste and effort (Project Management Institute, 2021).

In practice, an efficient PMO:

- Streamlines project management processes and avoids unnecessary bureaucracy,
- Uses standardized tools, templates, and systems to reduce duplication,
- Minimizes delays in approvals, reporting, and coordination,
- Maximizes the use of available resources (people, systems, and budgets).

PMO Effectiveness

PMO effectiveness refers to the extent to which a Project Management Office achieves its intended purpose and delivers strategic value by ensuring that projects, programmes, and portfolios are aligned with organisational objectives and contribute to desired outcomes. PMI emphasizes that an effective PMO supports strategic decision-making, improves delivery performance, and enables benefits realization by aligning execution with organisational strategy and governance (Project Management Institute, 2013). In this sense, effectiveness is measured not only by project delivery performance, but by the PMO's ability to influence priorities, enhance organisational capability, and support the achievement of strategic objectives of the organisation.

An effective PMO:

- Ensures the right projects are selected and prioritized,
- Improves project delivery performance (timeliness, quality, benefits),

- Enables informed decision-making through reliable data and governance,
- Strengthens alignment between projects and strategic objectives,
- Builds stakeholder confidence and organisational capability.

Chart 9 PMO Efficiency Versus PMO Effectiveness (Source: Author , 2025)

Aspect	PMO Efficiency	PMO Effectiveness
Focus	How well PMO work is being done	Whether the right work is being done by PMO
Application Areas	Internal processes and resources	Strategic outcomes and value
Question addressed	"Is there reduction in waste and effort?"	"Are intended results being achieved?"
Associated Risks	Delays, duplication, bureaucracy	Misaligned projects, low impact

The desired outcome for the OECS Commission should be a mature PMO that is both efficient and effective, resulting in responsible use of the Commission's Project resources and the delivery of strategic value to the OECS region. Chart 9 shows the key aspects of PMO effectiveness and efficiency. If the PMO is efficient but not effective the wrong projects could be delivered well. For example, an ineffective PMO would faciliate the delivery of projects that are not aligned to the Commission's objectives and priorities of the OECS Member States. On the other hand, if the PMO is effective but inefficient it could be faciliting the delivery of projects of strategic value but with excessive effort and cost. Neither of the aforementioned scenarios would be beneficial.

4.2.4 Analysis of Effectiveness and Efficiency of OECS PMO

The efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO was assessed in three main ways:

1) In-depth examination of the responses to the questions from the PMO maturity assessment
2) Semi-structured interviews conducted with relevant project management including the Head of the PMO on the structure, practices and resources available to the PMO
3) Observation and Analysis of the PMO in operation

In-depth Examination of PMO Maturity Survey Assessment

Given that the PMO Maturity Assessment survey was quite comprehensive and already received commitment from the respondents, the responses were used to contribute to the analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of the OECS PMO.

Method of Assessment:

A) Select a subset of 10 questions from the 40 questions that was most appropriate to assess

PMO-Efficiency and PMO-Effectiveness

B) Calculate the average score for these questions only from the responses received

C) Interpret the result using scoring rubric as shown in Chart 10 below.

Efficiency-Oriented Questions Subset Calculation

The questions used to assess PMO efficiency are shown in chart 11. Analysed collectively, the responses to these questions give a good indication of the degree to which the work of the PMO and project managers is streamlined and how easily reporting is facilitated e.g. through automated systems. The responses also give a sense of whether the PMO processes are reducing or increasing the effort of the project teams. Lastly, the responses help assess whether the PMO efforts are hindered by capacity constraints. The PMO was rated as being Moderately Efficient based on the average score for the efficiency assessment.

Chart 10 Scoring Rubric for PMO Efficiency and Effectiveness (Source: Author, 2025)

Average Scoring Range	Efficiency Interpretation	Effectiveness Interpretation
4.00-5.00	Highly Efficient	Highly Effective
3.00-3.99	Moderately Efficient	Moderately Effective
2.000-2.99	Limited Efficiency	Limited Effectivesness
<2.00	Not Efficient	Not Effective

Chart 11 PMO Effectiveness Analysis (Source: Author, 2025)

Question	No qualifier in the Survey	Dimension	Average Score
Standardized methodologies and templates are in place	6	Processes, Standards, and Methodology	3.75
Departments apply consistent project management practices	7	Processes, Standards, and Methodology	2.5
There are clear project initiation, planning, and closure procedures	8	Processes, Standards, and Methodology	3.5
Lessons learned are documented and shared	9	Processes, Standards, and Methodology	3.25
Project Management tools are used consistently	10	Processes, Standards, and Methodology	3.125
The PMO regularly reports progress and risks	12	Performance Measurement and Reporting	3.375
Staff receive regular project management training	21	Capability and Capacity Development	2.75
The PMO has adequate staffing and resources	24	Capability and Capacity Development	1.625
Project management software is integrated organization-wide.	26	Technology and Tools	3.5
The PMO maintains a centralized project repository	27	Technology and Tools	4
		Efficiency	**3.138**

Effectiveness-Oriented Questions Subset Calculation

The Maturity Assessment Questionnaire administered included five (5) questions to assess the Overall PMO Effectiveness. To be consistent with the evaluation for PMO efficiency, five (5) other questions were added, making it a subset of ten (10) questions in all. Chart 121 shows the questions used for this analysis. Collectively, the responses to this subset of questions helped to determine PMO effectiveness, and ultimately whether selection processes gave rise to the implementation of the right projects for the OECS Commission. The analysis also gives an indication of the level to which the PMO can influence decisions. Similarly, the analysis gives an indication of the level of trust that Stakeholders have in the PMO and whether the PMO improves outputs at the organisation. The average score for PMO effectiveness based on the assessed subset was 2.988. This score corresponds to limited effectiveness. Based on this score, the PMO may be effective in some areas but effectiveness in improving delivery timeliness, quality, and cross-department coordination is uneven throughout the organisation.

Chart 12 PMO Effectiveness Analysis (Source: Author, 2025)

Question	No qualifier in the Survey	Dimension	Average Score
The PMO has a clearly defined mandate and governance framework	1	Governance and Strategic Alignment	3.225
PMO objectives are aligned with the OECS strategic goals	2	Governance and Strategic Alignment	3.5
Senior management supports and champions the PMO	3	Governance and Strategic Alignment	2.875
Project prioritisation aligns with strategic objectives	5	Governance and Strategic Alignment	4.125
Stakeholders understand the PMO's value and role	17	Stakeholder Engagement and Communication	2.625
The PMO improves project delivery timeliness and quality	36	Overall PMO Effectiveness	2.5
The PMO adds measurable organisational value	37	Overall PMO Effectiveness	3.125
PMO reporting influences leadership decisions	38	Overall PMO Effectiveness	2.875
The PMO effectively coordinates cross-departmental projects	39	Overall PMO Effectiveness	2.375
The PMO is recognized and supported across the Commission	40	Overall PMO Effectiveness	2.65
		Effectiveness	**2.988**

4.2.5 Identification of Key PMO Strengths and Weaknesses

Based on the analysis of the results of the maturity questionnaire, the interviews, document review and observations, the following key strengths and weaknesses have been identified at the time of conducting the research for the PMO.

Strengths

- The PMO has legitimacy and visibility within the Commission.
- Governance structures and reporting mechanisms are in place.
- Technology and tools provide a solid foundation for portfolio visibility.
- Existence of a skilled staff body.
- Reporting measures are in place.
- Organisational culture is generally receptive to project management discipline.
- Innovation is supported by the Commission.
- The OECS Commisionis recognized as a leader in the successful delivery of projects for the Member States.

Weaknesses

- Engagement is not systematic.
- Communication planning is weak.

- Feedback loops are inconsistent.
- Stakeholders do not always understand PMO value.
- The PMO is perceived as under-resourced.
- Continuous improvement depends heavily on individuals.
- Performance is measured but not consistently used to manage or correct outcomes.
- Benefits realization, escalation thresholds, and portfolio-level decision rules are underdeveloped.

4.2.6 Limiting Factors Affecting PMO Effectiveness

The full set of results indicate that the PMO is functioning but there are some key areas that undermine the overall effectiveness of the PMO. The following areas have been identified as areas which would require attention to improve effectiveness. All of these areas have a lower average score than the overall score for the PMO maturity.

Capability and Capacity

Based on survey responses, the area of greatest risk for the PMO which restrains its work is that of PMO staffing and resourcing. The average response for this question *"The PMO has adequate staffing and resources"* was the lowest recorded with an average score of 1.63. The lack of adequate resources to meet the organisation's growing needs may have implications for other areas of the assessment of the PMO and might result in lower –than-desired levels of engagement. Although stakeholder engagement is recognised as a priority, it may become reactive rather than proactive due to time constraints and other competititing priorities. This could have implications for insufficient or inconsistent support to project staff as well. The PMO would also not have sufficient personnel to ensure that projects are doing as well as they should. This could result in lack of enforcement and support for regular reporting and inconsistent application of standards across units. Ultimately, if the PMO is understaffed it is likely to become overloaded and not able to perform at optimum. This in turn would make it more difficult to deliver its true "value" to the organisation resulting in other challenges, potentially creating a self-perpetuating cycle. From the perspective of the wider organisation, training and professional development are limited, a situation that results in limited capacity building.

Stakeholder Engagement

Based on the feedback Stakeholder engagement is an area that requires attention and affects the effectiveness of the PMO. This section obtained the lowest average scores emphasizing the need for a structure coordinated stakeholder management plan.

The following survey responses are worth noting:

- Question 16 *"The PMO has a formal communication plan."* Average Score of 2.25
- Question 18 *"Feedback is collected and acted upon regularly."* Average Score of 2.25
- Question 19 *"PMO-department communication is consistent and transparent."* Average Score of 2.38

The results indicate that there is insuficient stakeholder engagement by the PMO. This could have implications because even if the PMO is doing good work, weak engagement means that internal and external stakeholders become removed from the PMO reducing their motivation to support and work with the PMO. Consequently, this may affect stakeholders' uptake of tools, templates and standards recommended by the PMO.

Low Stakeholder engagement may potentially translate to potential reputational risk for both the PMO and the organisation because stakeholders such as Member States, Directorates, and partners require structured engagement. Moreover, weak engagement could potentially undermine adoption, trust, and perceived legitimacy. In addition, low stakeholder engagement could limit the PMO influence over the organisation's project delivery outcomes.

Consistency of Project Management Practice

Another factor affecting the efficiency of the PMO is the consistency of application of the project management practices in the organisation. This issue was assessed through question 7 in the survey *"Departments apply consistent project management practices"*. The result for this question was comparatively low with an average score of 2.50.

This response recognises that the PMO does have standards in place for the project managers, but the adoption is uneven with some adopting more than others. The reasons for this could be due to inadequate compliance mechanism or coaching support for the application of the standards. The uneven adoption of project management practices may also be the result of project teams viewing the application of standards as extra work that may not be critical to success. This may also suggest that the project management work is happening in silos so that there is inadequate co-mentoring or peer-to-peer review that can address this limitation.

Weak Cross-department Coordination

The response to this question shows that there is the need to improve the effectiveness of the PMO in facilitating *cross-department coordination*. The results for Question 39 *"The PMO effectively coordinates cross-departmental projects."* averaged a score of 2.38. Cross -departmental coordination is an important role for a mature PMO and particularly for intergovernmental agencies which have a pivotal role in building synergies for achieving strategic objectives. If the PMO is able to facilitate coordination amongst departments this could have a positive impact on its ability to improve project delivery timeliness and quality.

Performance Measurement Exists but does not Support Control or Decisions

According to data collected from the 8 respondents, project performance is measured but not consistently used to manage or correct outcomes. This suggests that there may be inadequate escalation thresholds and portfolio-level decision-making rules are underdeveloped. In such a situation, it is logical to assume that this limits the PMO's ability to fully support leadership with predictive insight or portfolio optimization.

PMO Recognition/Value is Uneven

Analysis of the results shows that there is an uneven valuing of the PMO and understanding of its mandate, governance framework, roles and responsibilities.

This is supported by the following scores.

- Question Item 40 *"The PMO is recognized and supported across the Commission"* **-** average score is 2.62
- *Question 17 "Stakeholders understand the PMO's value and role"* - average score is 2.62
- Question 1 "The PMO has a clearly defined mandate and governance framework" - average score is 2.88

Question 4 "Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined" - average score is 2.75

4.2.7 Watch List Areas for the PMO

According to the results of the survey some areas assessed are not critical, meaning they do not have low scores however, because the scores are not very high, it is important that they be given attention to ensure that there is no regression in these areas and the PMO continues to build on successes in these areas. These areas received an average score of approximately 3.0 and 3.12. These include the following:

- *Question 9 "Lessons applied to new initiatives" -average score* 3.00

- *Question 29 "Data analytics used for decision-making"* - average score 3.00
- *Question 34 "Change management built into delivery" - average score* 3.00
- *Question 10 "Project Management tools used consistently" - average score* 3.12
- *Question 23 "Continuous improvement is part of PMO culture" -average score* 3.12

These areas are important determinants of the maturity of the PMO as there is direct link between making use of lessons learned and process improvements. Similarly, change management levels affect adoption and sustainability of good project management practices.

Analysis of the limiting factors and the watch list areas, points to the need for more work to be done to fully internalise and institutionalise the PMO so that it becomes a strategic enabler for the organisation.

4.3 PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan

The following section addresses the results for objective 3, the development of an implementation plan and appropriate KPIs for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development.

4.3.1 Objective Context

The projects and portfolio landscape is changing as sustainability considerations are becoming not just nice-to have, but an imperative. Sustainability has always been a priority for the OECS region, and by extension the OECS Commission especially because as a grouping of small island developing states (SIDS), sustainability is fundamental to the region's continued survival. The Commission is set to expand its portfolios in the Blue Economy, Sustainable Energy, Climate Change and Biodiversity. Furthermore, there are development partner obligations to ensure that sustainability is factored into projects across the board. To be able to successfully deliver sustainable projects, the PMO must be enhanced along its maturity pathway, and it must begin to proactively ensure green project management is embraced.

To achieve the above, the identified weaknesses and limitations of the existing PMO need to be addressed in a structured way. The establishment of a PMO, at the OECS Commission and its operation for the past six (6) years is already a significant achievement, which sets the OECS Commission ahead of similar regional entities. However, there is need for a review and redesign for strengthening the OECS PMO. The current maturity assessment places the PMO at OPM3 Level 2 (Measured). Close examination confirms that there are standardized project management processes, and basic performance reporting mechanisms. These foundational elements indicate a functioning PMO that is no longer ad hoc. However, maturity varies across dimensions, with gaps most evident in capability, stakeholder engagement, and benefits realization. An implementation plan for enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development must firstly prioritize gaps that most impact performance and secondly incorporate sustainability performance indicators.

4.3.2 Rationale for the PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan

The main reasons for the proposed Enhancement Implementation Plan are as follows:

1) To provide focus and direction for the OECS Commission PMO Maturity
2) To enable strategic and forward-thinking vision for the PMO that is co-owned by the organisation
3) To create a communication platform of visibility that informs stakeholders of the PMO's plans.
4) To build the capacity of the PMO for the successful delivery of sustainable projects at the OECS Commission

4.3.3 PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan Goal

To advance the OECS Commission PMO from its current maturity state of Level 2 (measured) to the next level of maturity Level 3 (controlled) by implementiation of a structured and targeted course of action focussing on consolidating processes, embedding performance measurement practices across the organization and capacity development.

4.3.4 Guiding Principles - PMO Enhancement Plan

Strengthening the OECS PMO to meet the evolving needs of the organisation and its Member States will require a structured transition toward OPM3 Level 3 (Controlled) which will enable the PMO to consistently use performance data to manage delivery, support strategic decisions, and demonstrate value to its internal and external stakeholders. The following guiding principles are proposed for the PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan:

- Flexible and agile approaches to accommodate for unplanned developments and adjustment of priorities that may affect the PMO.
- Adopt new ways of working, new technologies and innovation.
- Support a learning organisation grounded in continuous improvement.

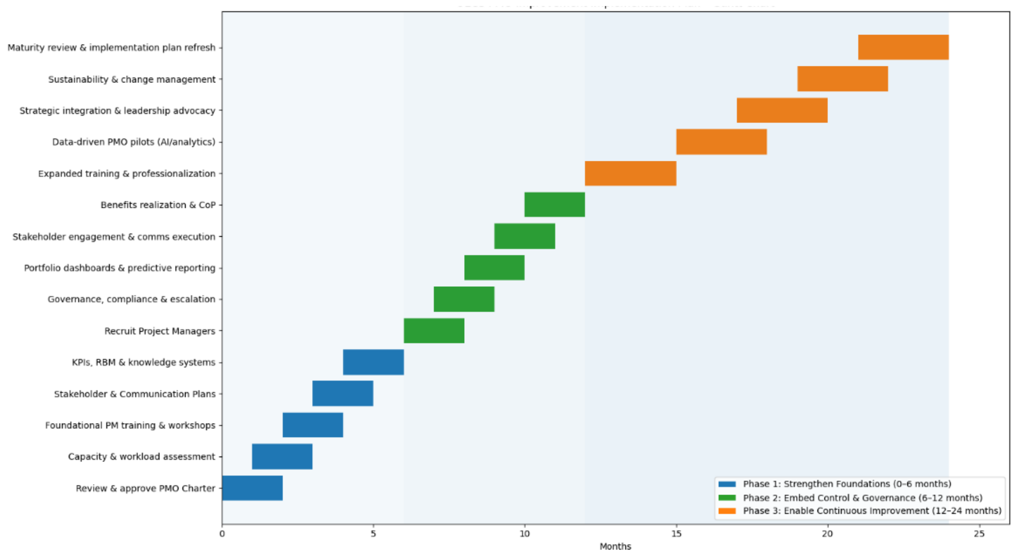
4.3.5 Priorities for the PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan

In development of the Enhancement Implementation Plan, it is important to firstly understand the current PMO situation including the pain points or limiting factors for success (Farid S. , 2021) The results of objectives 1 and 2 of this research, through the maturity assessment have pointed to the need to address capacity, stakeholder and communications management and performance driven decision-making. The proposed Enhancement Implementation Plan must address these gaps and propose a phased approach to move to the next maturity level with measurable milestones. The planned actions comprise a mix of short-term quick wins and medium- to long-term initiatives, including cultural change that strengthen the PMO.

4.3.6 Proposed PMO Enhancement Plan Implementation Timeline

Given that there is need for impactful interventions within a short timeframe, the projected duration of OECS PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan is 18-24 months. This timeframe is adequate to see meaningful progress whilst allowing time to make adjustments that may be needed during implementation. Three phases are proposed for the PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan as shown in figure 15. The main actions and milestones under each phase are described below.

Figure 15 Proposed Timeline of PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan (Source: Author, 2025)



PMO Enhancement Plan Phase 1: Strengthen Foundations (0–6 Months)

Objective: Stabilize the PMO, build core capability, and establish legitimacy and shared understanding.

Recommended Actions:

- Review the PMO Charter and clarify scope, authority, and alignment with business strategy
- Address capacity gaps (skills, workload, staffing), assess PMO capacity and workload
- Implement targeted training focused on project management fundamentals for all project staff
- Deliver virtual workshops on targeted project management areas including risk management, scheduling, and stakeholder communication for OECS Commission and Member States
- Build awareness on Green Project Management
- Clarify and formalize PMO stakeholder engagement through an approved Stakeholder Management Plan and engagement calendar
- Develop a Communication Plan for the PMO
- Promote results-based management
- Promote regular donor and OECS Commission reporting
- Define a concise set (5-7) of PMO performance indicators aligned to OECS strategic objectives and sustainability
- Establish a knowledge and learning loop to document and share project insights

- Conduct at least 2 internal workshops on sensitization on the PMO Enhancement Roadmap

These actions collectively set stage to improve the work of the PMO building on existing strengths and successes and addressing the gaps and deficiencies with easily implementable steps. Chart 13 highlights the milestones for Phase 1 and the associated deliverables and success criteria.

Chart 13 PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan Phase 1 (Source: Author, 2025)

Milestone	Period	Deliverable	Success Criteria
Milestone 1.1 PMO Governance and Mandate Clarified	Month 2	Revised and approved PMO Charter Clear articulation of PMO scope, authority, and alignment with OECS strategy Formal endorsement by senior management of the Commission	PMO roles and escalation authority formally documented Leadership sponsorship confirmed
Milestone 1.2 PMO Capacity and Capability Baseline Established	Month 3	PMO workload and capacity assessment completed Skills gap analysis for PMO and project staff Capacity strengthening recommendations endorsed	Clear understanding of resourcing gaps Recruitment and training needs validated
Milestone 1.3 Core PMO Capability Strengthened	Month 4	Delivery of foundational project management training for project staff Virtual workshops on risk management, scheduling, and stakeholder communication Introduction to Green Project Management concepts	Minimum 70% of project staff trained Shared understanding of sustainability and green Project Management principles
Milestone 1.4 Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Institutionalized	Month 5	Approved PMO Stakeholder Management Plan (See section 4.4) Approved PMO Communication Plan (see section 4.5) Engagement calendar covering OECS Commission and Member States	Defined PMO engagement channels and frequency External and Internal Stakeholders informed of PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan and their expected role
Milestone 1.5 Performance Monitoring Foundations Established	Month 6	5–7 PMO KPIs defined and approved Results-based management principles adopted Knowledge management and lessons learned mechanism established At least two PMO roadmap sensitization workshops completed	KPIs aligned with OECS strategic and sustainability objectives Regular reporting cadence established

PMO Enhancement Plan Phase 2: Embed Control and Governance (6–12 Months)

Objective: Move from measurement to control, strengthen authority, and improve delivery predictability.

Recommended Actions*:*

- Recruit at least 2 additional Project Managers to support the PMO
- Develop a resource mobilisation plan to fund standardized training and certification (e.g., PMP) for project teams.
- Promote agile and hybrid PMO practices based on Scrum or other hybrid project management approaches alongside traditional approaches
- Strengthen compliance mechanisms and embed processes into performance expectations
- Leverage reporting tools for predictive and portfolio-level insight
- Formalize a cross-departmental coordination mechanism using standardized reporting templates.
- Promote performance information to actively manage risks, resolve bottlenecks, and guide investment decisions.
- Reinforce PMO value through success stories, leadership advocacy, and staff capability development.
- Strengthen feedback loops and stakeholder satisfaction tracking

- Introduce targeted training, mentoring, or surge support where needed.
- Encourage Green Project Management Certification for Project teams
- Implement the stakeholder engagement as per stakeholder management plan
- Implement regular communication aspects of Communication plan
- Introduce escalation thresholds for schedule, cost, and risk variance,
- Introduce benefits realization tracking and support move beyond deliverables to monitor if projects achieve intended outcomes (e.g., cost savings, revenue increase).
- Improve Resource Management by tracking capacity vs. demand across projects.
- Strengthen portfolio dashboards to support executive decision-making.
- Create a Project Managers Community of Practice for lessons learned and sharing.

These actions build on those of phase 1 and address the complexity and the need for sustainability in projects. Chart 14 highlights the milestones for Phase 2 and the associated deliverables and success criteria.

Chart 14 Phase 2 PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan (Source: Author, 2025)

Milestone	Period	Deliverables	Success Criteria
Milestone 2.1 PMO Capacity Expanded	Month 8	Recruitment of at least two additional Project Managers to support Roadmap Resource mobilization plan for financing training and certification approved	Reduced workload pressure on existing PMO staff Funding identified for professional development in project management
Milestone 2.2 Governance and Compliance Mechanisms Operational	Month 9	Compliance mechanisms embedded into performance expectations Escalation thresholds for schedule, cost, and risk approved Standardized reporting templates adopted across departments	Clear project troubleshooting escalation pathways in use at the Commission Consistent project reporting across the portfolios
Milestone 2.3 Portfolio Control and Decision Support Strengthened	Month 10	Enhanced portfolio dashboards implemented Predictive reporting elements introduced (trend analysis, early warnings) Performance information used in management reviews	Leadership uses PMO dashboards for decision-making Risks and bottlenecks actively managed
Milestone 2.4 Stakeholder Engagement Fully Activated	Month 11	Stakeholder engagement plan implemented Communication plan executed on schedule Stakeholder satisfaction tracking initiated	Improved stakeholder feedback scores Increased understanding of PMO value
Milestone 2.5 Benefits and Capability Embedded	Month 12	Benefits realization tracking framework implemented Resource capacity vs demand tracking operational Project Managers Community of Practice established Green Project Management certification promoted	Benefits tracked beyond outputs and communicated to Commission staff Knowledge sharing institutionalized

PMO Enhancement Plan Phase 3: Enable Continuous Improvement

(12–24 Months)

Objective: Institutionalize learning, optimize performance, and position the PMO as a strategic partner.

Recommended Actions:

- Expand training and professional development
- Promote the Data-Driven PMO by using predictive analytics (e.g.,AI based-risk forecasting, project success probability)
- Embed PMO performance insights into senior management reporting
- Promote leadership advocacy for project management discipline
- Institutionalise regular maturity assessments and set improvement targets
- Showcase successful sustainable projects across thematic areas
- Promote change management integration for project management by active collaboration with Human Resource Unit to ensure projects achieve adoption and cultural shifts.
- Institutionalize regular monitoring of sustainability indicators for projects
- Conduct alignment checks with OECS environmental strategies
- Track improvements and recalibrate the PMO enhancement implementation plan

Phase 3 activities support the introduction of new technologies and knowledge whilst maintaining the built successes in project management. Chart 15 shows the milestones associated with this phase.

Chart 15 Phase 3 PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan (Source: Author, 2025)

Milestone	Period	Deliverables	Success Criteria
Milestone 3.1 Continuous Learning and Professionalization Strengthened	Month 15	Expanded training and mentoring programme aimed at all staff Advanced and new project management and sustainability training delivered	Increased professional certification levels Improved delivery consistency
Milestone 3.2 Data-Driven PMO Capabilities Piloted	Month18	Pilot use of predictive analytics or AI-based risk forecasting in collaboration with OECS youth AI team Success probability models tested on selected projects	Early warning indicators improve decision quality for projects Lessons captured from project pilots for further improvement
Milestone 3.3 Strategic Integration and Leadership Engagement	Month 20	PMO performance insights embedded in senior management reporting Leadership advocacy for PM discipline formalized	PMO positioned as strategic advisor Increased OECS leadership team engagement with the PMO
Milestone 3.4 Sustainability and Change Management Institutionalized	Month 22	Sustainability indicators embedded in project monitoring Change management integrated within Human Resources processes Successful sustainable projects showcased	Sustainability outcomes are systematically monitored, documented, and publicized. Organization-wide adoption of sustainability practices is strengthened across all departments
Milestone 3.5 Maturity Review and Enhancement Implementation Plan Revision Completed	Month 24	A follow-up PMO maturity assessment is conducted Improvement targets are reviewed, updated and shared Enhancement Implementation plan is recalibrated based on lessons learned	Demonstrable maturity improvement Defined priorities for next phase

4.3.7 PMO Implementation Plan Risk Mitigation Analysis

The proposed PMO Enhancement Roadmap has been designed and structured in three progressive phases that are logically sequenced and based on the current organisational maturity of the Commission revealed through the research study. The implementation of the roadmap though feasible does present some organisational, behavioural, financial, and governance risks due to uncertainty which must be adequately addressed. To ensure successful implementation, potential risks must be proactively identified, assessed, and mitigated. Key implementation risks anticipated are discussed below and are summarised in Chart 16.

A) Capacity Constraints Delay PMO Enhancement Roadmap

The implementation of the PMO Enhancement roadmap requires additional project management capacity owing to the introduction of new governance, reporting, and sustainability mechanisms for the Commission. Phase 2 addresses the recruitment of additional Project Managers for these purposes. Capacity constraints in this regard could cause delayed milestones, overworked staff and the superficial adoption of new controls with limited impact.

This risk can be managed through early recruitment and phased rollout, ensuring staffing adequacy ratios in the KPI framework and the correct sequencing of initiatives across the PMO roadmap phases.

B) Funding Limitations for Implementation

Implementation of the PMO enhancement roadmap requires funding for, *inter alia*, recruitment, training, certification and technology upgrades. Consequently, funding constraints could slow execution of the roadmap. The expected impact would include delays in recruitment, reduced staff training coverage and the cost of dashboards or predictive analytics by the PMO becoming prohibitive.

This risk can be managed through the development of a resource mobilization plan in Phase 2 and by intentionally prioritizing high-impact, low-cost initiatives first for implementation. This could be supported by a phased introduction of technology by the PMO for example, piloting of predictive analytics could be deferred to month 18 towards the end of the implementation roadmap period. The introduction of ESG and sustainability alignment may bring additional value and strengthen the donor funding position of the OECS Commission.

C) Resistance to Change

The introduction of new compliance mechanisms and governance controls may be met with resistance by staff. This is particularly relevant as the proposed PMO mandates new changes including escalation thresholds, compliance mechanisms and standardized reporting templates. The impacts of resistance to change could be manifested in passive resistance and reduced staff morale.

This risk could be managed through establishing clear communication and demonstration of results of the PMO. This could be the focus of sensitization workshops put on by the PMO. It would also be helpful to have leadership advocacy for the PMO as the leadership has strong influence potential. Working with the Human Resource unit to promote integrated change management could also be an effective mitigation strategy.

D) Change Fatigue amongst Staff

Implementation of the roadmap is projected to be undertaken in 24 months. During this period multiple reforms are expected to be introduced and established by proposed PMO. Continuous training, governance shifts, dashboards, ESG integration, and predictive analytics may overwhelm staff. Possible impacts of this risk include reduced staff engagement, burnout at the organisation and declining interest and momentum in later phases of the enhancement roadmap.

This risk could be managed through by the clear phasing of the proposed enhancement initiatives clearly and using the milestone achievements as motivational checkpoints for the whole Commission. Smart sequencing for example could include introduction of technology only after governance stabilization. The reinforcement of quick wins in Phase 1 by leaders could serve to build confidence. It would also be important to continually monitor stakeholder satisfaction to identify and address early morale-related issues.

E) Negative Perception of the PMO

This risk could result in the PMO being perceived as bureaucratic or overly controlling. This is especially relevant as the Strategic Hybrid model proposed for the OECS Commission increases governance enforcement. The possible impacts of this risk include reduced collaboration within the organisation for the work of the PMO and limited adoption of the PMO templates.

The management strategies for this risk involve effectively communicating PMO value and demonstrating practical impact. This could be supported using PMO Dashboard visibility. The tracking of stakeholder satisfaction scores would also support early detection of the risk for mitigation action.

F) Insufficient Leadership Sponsorship

This risk addresses the potential for lack of sustained executive backing for the new PMO. This would be a critical risk as the PMO’s governance authority depends on senior endorsement and escalation thresholds require executive support. In addition, strategic integration requires leadership advocacy. Possible impacts of this risk include weak enforcement of escalation thresholds and reduced strategic positioning. This risk could also affect the governance authority of the proposed PMO.

Management of this risk could include the early identification of a leadership champion for the PMO. It would also be important to secure charter approval early for the PMO emphasizing the new model and the associated functions. Provisions for PMO reporting in senior management meetings and process would also support risk mitigation.

G) Stakeholder Misalignment

This risk addresses the possibility of PMO stakeholders (divisions, Member States, donors) not sharing the same expectations of the PMO's role, authority, governance controls and value contribution. The possible impacts include resistance, conflicting priorities, delayed adoption and weakened strategic positioning.

Implementing the Stakeholder Management Plan in Phase 2 would directly address this risk. Additionally, it would be useful to proactively track satisfaction scores for the PMO stakeholders and conduct regular alignment checks with OECS environmental strategies. Milestone checkpoints can be used to validate alignment.

H) Sustainability Treated as an Add-On or peripheral

With this risk sustainability may not be fully integrated into the PMO governance structure. The potential impacts would include weak ESG credibility and limited regenerative development impact of the work of the Commission.

Management of this risk would necessitate the embedding of sustainability in KPIs and lifecycles. The adoption of supporting mechanisms like Green PM adoption targets and the institutionalization of sustainability indicators are also useful risk management strategies.

I) Implementation Drift

There is a risk of implementation drift which may occur when the planned governance reforms, capability improvements, and sustainability integrations for the PMO enhancement are initiated but not consistently followed through, monitored, or reinforced. This can result from competing organisational priorities, leadership changes, resource constraints, or declining momentum after early milestones are achieved. Managing this risk can include robust monitoring of the milestones associated with the PMO enhancement plan.

Executive Sponsor Ownership

Clear ownership of the Enhancement Implementation Plan should be established with designated owners assigned to each action. Work packages should be designed around these actions to ensure ease of completion. Executive sponsor ownership or the Leadership team at the Commission has an important part to play in risk mitigation for the PMO enhancement implementation plan. This role can be integrated into the PMO Enhancement Roadmap's risk mitigation framework as shown in Chart 14. It is particularly important to formalise the accountability for high-impact risks. Other measures include embedding roadmap KPIs into senior management reporting, defining escalation triggers requiring sponsor intervention, and linking sponsorship to milestone oversight and maturity reassessment. Successful implementation of these measures will ensure that executive support is not passive endorsement but an active governance control mechanism that reduces implementation drift and strengthens strategic alignment for the PMO.

Chart 16 Risk Mitigation PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan (Source: Author, 2025)

Risk	Probability	Impact	Overall Risk Level	Proposed Mitigation	Proposed Executive Role
Capacity constraints	High	High	Critical	Early recruitment (Phase 2); phased rollout of initiatives; monitor staffing adequacy ratio (KPI); use of surge/temporary support where required	Approve recruitment; monitor staffing adequacy KPI quarterly; escalate resourcing gaps at leadership meetings
Funding limitations	Medium–High	High	High	Develop resource mobilization plan; phase technology investments; align roadmap with donor priorities; prioritize high-impact/low-cost actions	Lead resource mobilization plan; secure funding during budget cycles; align roadmap with donor and ESG priorities; protect strategic PMO investments
Resistance to change	Medium	High	High	Conduct sensitization workshops (Phase 1); leadership advocacy; structured change management with HR; highlight quick wins early	Publicly endorse roadmap reforms
Insufficient leadership sponsorship	Medium	High	High	Secure formal Charter approval; identify executive champion; embed PMO reporting into Leadership team meetings; regular leadership engagement reviews	Lead quarterly roadmap reviews; ensure roadmap remains on Leadership agenda
Stakeholder misalignment	Medium	Medium - High	Moderate	Implement Stakeholder Management Plan; regular engagement calendar; satisfaction tracking (bi-annual survey); alignment checks with OECS strategy	Review stakeholder satisfaction metrics; intervene where alignment gaps threaten adoption
Change fatigue	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Sequence reforms logically; limit concurrent initiatives; communicate milestones achieved; reinforce benefits and quick wins	Promote milestone achievements; Reduce excessive simultaneous reforms
Negative perception of PMO	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Communicate PMO value through dashboards and success stories; demonstrate benefits realization;	Reference dashboard insights in leadership meetings; publicly highlight PMO contributions
Sustainability treated as add-on and not core	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Embed sustainability in KPIs and stage gates; require ESG alignment in project approval; monitor Green PM adoption rate	Reinforce sustainability as strategic priority for the Commission
Implementation drift	Medium	High	High	Use KPI framework (Chart 15) and Milestone Monitoring (Chart 16); quarterly performance reviews; recalibrate roadmap annually via maturity reassessment	Lead quarterly milestone reviews; support corrective action for variance; approve roadmap recalibration

4.3.8 PMO Enhancement Plan KPI Framework

It is important the PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan be accompanied by a set of appropriate Key Performance Indicator (KPIs). A KPI framework will allow the Commission to monitor and measure progress, assess effectiveness and make timely, evidence-based adjustments as required. Based on the results of the study and best practices the KPIs framework shown in Chart 17 is proposed. Use of this KPI framework will determine whether planned actions are delivering the intended outcomes and benefits, and whether corrective action is required to remain aligned with goals and objectives set for the PMO. More explicitly the framework will allow the OECS PMO to:

- Track progress against each of the 3 phases of the implementation plan
- Monitor whether capacity building, governance controls, and continuous improvement mechanisms for project management are being incorporated into the Commission's operations as intended
- Support informed decision-making and prioritisation throughout implementation of the Enhancement Implementation Plan.

The KPI Framework is supplemented by a milestone monitoring framework (see Chart 17) for the PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan. The study recognises that milestones are also important to the successful implementation of the improvement plan as they serve as formal checkpoints that confirm the targets achieved and not just the conduct of activities. According to the Project Management Institute (PMI) milestones provide key control points for performance review and decision-making, enabling leaders to assess progress, validate assumptions, and authorize corrective action when necessary (Project Management Institute, 2017). For the OECS PMO, regularly monitoring of the implementation plan milestones will strengthen accountability, support evidence-based management, and ensure that each phase of the Enhancement Implementation Plan builds credibly on the last. The Monitoring of milestones will also reduce the risk of implementation drift and reinforce confidence amongst the PMO stakeholders.

Chart 17 PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan KPI Monitoring Framework (Source: Author, 2025)

Dimension	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Success Criteria	Data Source	Frequency
Governance	Revised PMO Charter approved and in force	0	Approved	Charter endorsed by LT	LT minutes	Once
Governance	% projects aligned to OECS strategy	TBD	≥90%	All active projects mapped	Portfolio register	Quarterly
Capability	PMO staffing adequacy ratio	Low	≥1.0	Capacity meets demand	Capacity analysis	Quarterly
Capability	% project staff trained in PM fundamentals	<50%	≥85%	Training completed	Training records	Quarterly
Processes	% projects using standard templates	TBD	≥95%	Consistent adoption	Project audits	Quarterly
Performance	% projects on schedule/budget	TBD	≥85%	Variance within thresholds	Dashboards	Monthly
Performance	% high risks with mitigation plans	TBD	100%	All critical risks addressed	Risk register	Monthly
Engagement	Stakeholder satisfaction score	TBD	≥3.5/5	Improved engagement	Survey	Bi-annual
Sustainability	% projects applying Green PM practices	0%	≥60%	Sustainability embedded	Project reviews	Quarterly
Maturity	PMO maturity score	3.06	≥3.5	Progress to next level	Maturity survey	Annual

Chart 18 PMO Enhancement Monitoring Framework Milestones (Source: Author, 2025)

Phase	Milestone	Period Due	Evidence Required
Phase 1	Stakeholder Management Plan approved	Month 5	Approved plan
Phase 1	Communications Management Plan approved	Month 5	Approved plan
Phase 2	Project Managers recruitment completed	Month 8	Human Resources records
Phase 2	Enhanced portfolio dashboards operational	Month 9	Live dashboards
Phase 3	Sustainability indicators embedded in projects	Month 22	Monitoring reports
Phase3	Follow-up maturity assessment	Month 24	

4.3.9 Proposed Appropriate Sustainability KPISs for the OECS

Adopting sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs) is critical to ensure that OECS Commission projects and programmes generate both short-term outputs and long-term environmental, social, and economic value for its Member States. Sustainability KPIs enable the systematic measurement of outcomes related to resilience, inclusiveness, resource efficiency, and regenerative development, thereby strengthening accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making across the project portfolios. The Green Project Management (GPM) P5™ Standard provides a globally recognized framework for embedding sustainability into project management (Green Project Management, 2025). By adopting the P5™ Standard, the OECS Commission can align its PMO practices with international best practices, strengthen donor confidence, and ensure that sustainability considerations are consistently translated into measurable actions and outcomes across all projects.

This research proposes the incorporation of the P5 standard indicators on a phased basis and proposes the following for inclusion by the OECS PMO:

1. People Impacts Sustianability Indicators (Social Sustainability)

Intended focus: equity, inclusion, capacity building, and community benefit

a) **Percentage of projects demonstrating inclusive stakeholder engagement**

   Definition: Projects with documented engagement plans involving communities, Member States, and vulnerable groups.

b) **Local capacity development index**

   Definition: % of projects that include training, skills transfer, or institutional strengthening components.

c) **Gender and social inclusion integration rate**

   Definition: % of projects that integrate gender, youth, or vulnerable group considerations in design and delivery.

d) **Community satisfaction score**

   Definition: Average satisfaction rating from beneficiary or stakeholder feedback surveys.

e) **Health, safety, and well-being compliance rate**

Definition: % of projects meeting OECS Health and Saftey and safeguarding requirements.

2. Planet Impact Sustainability Indicators (Environmental Sustainability)

Intended Focus: environmental protection, resilience, and regeneration

a) **Percentage of projects applying climate-resilient or nature-based solutions**

Definition: Projects incorporating ecosystem-based adaptation or regenerative approaches.

b) **Environmental impact mitigation rate**

Definition: % of projects with documented environmental risk assessments and mitigation measures.

c) **Greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction contribution**

Definition: Estimated emissions avoided or reduced through project activities.

d) **Natural resource efficiency indicator**

Definition: Projects demonstrating reduced energy, water, or material use relative to baseline.

e) **Ecosystem regeneration score**

Definition: Projects contributing to ecosystem restoration, biodiversity enhancement, or land rehabilitation

3. Prosperity Impact Sustainability Indicators (Economic & Institutional Sustainability)

Intended focus: long-term value, economic resilience, and institutional effectiveness

a) **Percentage of projects with documented benefits realization plans**

Definition: Projects tracking economic, social, or environmental benefits beyond outputs.

b) **Cost-effectiveness ratio**

Definition: Cost per unit of outcome achieved (e.g., cost per household reached, cost per acre restored).

c) **Local economic participation rate**

Definition: % of project spend benefiting local suppliers, SMEs, or regional institutions.

d) **Financial sustainability score**

Definition: % of projects with post-completion sustainability or maintenance plans.

e) **Donor alignment and value-for-money rating**

Definition: Projects rated positively against donor Results Based Management (RBM) and Value for Money (VfM) criteria.

4.3.10 Operationalisation of Sustainability and Regenerative Development

The third objective of this research focuses on the development of an implementation plan and KPIs, for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development. The proposed PMO is expected to operationalize Sustainability and Regenerative Development at the Commission by ensuring that these concepts are proactively and explicitly integrated into the project and portfolio processes at the Commission as 'must haves' as opposed to 'nice to have' considerations. This can be achieved through the following ways:

1) Establish Sustainability as a Governance Requirement

This measure could be facilitated by adding a requirement that every project concept note to submitted to the OECS Commission's PROF or its successor demonstrates sustainability alignment statements or environmental and regenerative development. This could include references to OECS environmental strategies, the SDGs or the regenerative development principles. This requirement could also be satisfied by the introduction of sustainability compliance before project approval and sustainability impact assessment at stage-gate reviews.

2) Integrate Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria into Project Selection Scoring Models

The ESG framework will demonstrate how the proposed PMO can manage risks and opportunities related to sustainability, ethics, and long-term value creation. This could be enabled through the allocation of a percentage of the overall score to criteria such as sustainability impact, regenerative capacity and social inclusion alongside regular project assessment criteria such as financial viability. The assessment can be based on agreed questions that allow sustainability factors to influence approval decisions.

3) Integrate Regenerative Impact into OECS Project Business Case Templates

This proposal could be achieved by a reworking of the business case template by the PMO to allow projects to include their regenerative contributions such as, net positive environmental impact, community capacity strengthening and long-term ecological resilience.

4) Add sustainability and regenerative KPIs into the PMO's dashboards and reporting

The PMI posits that performance measurement should focus on value delivery and outcomes rather than activity completion (Project Management Istitute, 2021). The use of sustainability indicators linked to benefits realization frameworks, ensures that environmental value is monitored, reported, and used to inform portfolio decisions by the PMO. Sustainability can be operationalised though the integration of Portfolio-Level

Sustainability KPIs such as the percentage of projects with sustainability indicators embedded, percentage of projects incorporating Green Project Management principles, or the number of sustainability KPIs per project or portfolio. The sustainability and regenerative development KPIs can be further integrated within portfolio dashboards helping make sustainability visible in decision making.

4.4 PMO Stakeholder Management Plan

The following sections present the proposed stakeholder management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.

4.4.1 PMO Stakeholder Management Plan Rationale

Based on the surveys and interviews conducted for specific objective 1, it was confirmed that a critical intervention for enhancing the work of the PMO at the OECS Commission was to develop and implement an effective stakeholder management plan. The PMI recognises Project Stakeholder Management as extremely important for the effective engagement of stakeholders in project decisions and execution. Stakeholder engagement is an important part of projects because it facilitates relationships, influence, collaboration and participation, all which contribute to project success. There are 4 main Project Stakeholder Management processes according to the PMI: 1) Identify Stakeholders, 2) Plan Stakeholder

Engagement, 3) Manage Stakeholder Engagement and 4) Monitor Stakeholder Engagement (Project Management Institute, 2017).

As indicated, much of the work of the OECS Commission in serving its Member States is undertaken through projects, a stakeholder engagement strategy is essential for the OECS PMO because the PMO supports and coordinates several projects across multiple OECS Member States. Additionally, the Commission also works with several development partners. The beneficiaries served by the Commission are diverse and include government agencies, Civil Society Organisations, CSOs, the private sector and the public. Within the Commission the PMO is expected to support multiple internal divisions and technical units while ensuring regional alignment and coherence across project portfolios. Effective stakeholder engagement is therefore imperative to the work of the PMO as it seeks to harmonise processes, improve transparency, reduce bottlenecks, and ensure that projects deliver meaningful impact to the OECS. Cognisant of the key role of a stakeholder management plan for the OECS PMO, this research proposes a comprehensive stakeholder management plan, detailed below. The plan supports the PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan and addresses identified gaps in stakeholder engagement, communication, coordination across Member States, internal divisions, and development partners.

The Stakeholder Management Plan outlines the goals, guiding principles, processes, responsibilities and tools to be used for planning, implementing, and monitoring stakeholder engagement by the PMO.

4.4.2 PMO Stakeholder Management Plan Goal

To strengthen the effectiveness, visibility, and legitimacy of the OECS Commission Project Management Office (PMO) by establishing a structured, consistent, and proactive approach to stakeholder engagement for the successful delivery of projects.

4.4.3 PMO Stakeholder Management Plan Objectives:

- Improve trust and visibility of the PMO across the Commission
- Enhance alignment between projects and organisational priorities
- Facilitate timely decision-making and support
- Build stronger development partner and Member State collaboration
- Support the development of more impactful projects and interventions
- Support greater ownership of projects being undertaken at the commission
- Facilitate a shared vision of the goals and strategies of the PMO (e.g. allow for quicker responses)

4.4.4 Guiding Principles for PMO Stakeholder Management

It is important to define guiding principles for the PMO Stakeholder engagement strategy by recognising the above pillars of the OECS PMO engagement with stakeholders. Five guiding principles are proposed as follows:

1. Transparency and Accountability-Clear and regular reporting, agreed decision-pathways and open communication
2. Participation, Co-Creation, Co-Ownership-Project partners and Member States are fully engaged in project design and governance, not only implementation
3. Equity and Inclusion-Stakeholder engagement must be representative of all Member States (full and associate members) and sectors including vulnerable groups
4. Responsiveness and Forward Thinking-Stakeholder engagement must be adaptive and proactive based on the feedback and the evolving and anticipated needs
5. Advancing Regional Mandate whilst respecting sovereignty -Member States retain their authority whilst the Commission supports coordination and a regional approach to achieving national priorities

4.4.5 Proposals for Stakeholder Management Processes

The stakeholder management plan is implemented through four integrated processes: Identify Stakeholders, Plan Stakeholder Engagement, Manage Stakeholder Engagement, and Monitor Stakeholder Engagement as per the PMI. These processes are iterative and apply across the full project and portfolio lifecycle.

Process 1: Identify Stakeholders

Objective

To systematically identify and document all stakeholders who influence or are impacted by the OECS PMO and its supported projects, ensuring comprehensive visibility across portfolios and Member States. A centralized PMO stakeholder register will be established and maintained, with updates conducted on a quarterly basis.

Approach

Stakeholders can be identified using several approaches but given that the PMO supports several projects and has limited personnel it is important to have a systematic approach and to work collaboratively for efficiency. The following recommendations should form the basis for effective stakeholder identification:

- Establish a central PMO stakeholder register maintained and updated quarterly.
- Identify stakeholders at organisational, portfolio, programme, and project levels.
- Conduct PMO-led stakeholder mapping workshops across OECS divisions and portfolios during the first month of implementation.
- Categorize stakeholders as internal or external, and further by thematic portfolio and Member State relevance.

Key Stakeholder Groups

Based on an understanding of the structure and mandate of the OECS Commission the research identified the following key PMO stakeholders:

- Internal Stakeholders: OECS Leadership Team, PMO staff, Project Managers, technical units, functional managers, portfolio heads

- External Stakeholders: OECS Member States (Ministries, Permanent Secretaries, national focal points), development partners, regional institutions, private sector entities, Civil Society organisations, CSOs, and beneficiaries.

This centralized identification approach addresses the current fragmentation of stakeholder engagement practices identified in the assessment.

Process 2: Plan Stakeholder Engagement

Objective

To define tailored engagement strategies based on stakeholder influence, interest, expectations, and desired level of involvement.

Stakeholder Analysis

An analysis of the PMO stakeholders is critical to determining how best to engage each stakeholder category based on their needs.

Following identification, the PMO will conduct structured stakeholder analysis using:

- Power–Interest Grids
- Engagement Assessment Matrices

Each stakeholder will be assessed against:

- Influence (decision-making power)

- Interest in PMO outcomes
- Impact on project delivery
- Desired engagement level

Chart 19 below proposes an efficient tool to capture results of the PMO stakeholder anlsysis. Stakeholder analysis has been proposed for a selected sample of the PMO's stakeholders and this can be further elaborated for all stakeholders as necessary.

Chart 19 Proposed Stakeholder Analysis Template (Source: Author, 2025)

Stakeholder group	**Interest**	**Influence level**	**Power**	**Engagement Level**
Leadership Team	High-strategic oversight and resource allocation	High	High	Consult
Project Teams	High -Execution partners	Medium	Medium	Consult
Member States	High-Beneficiaries, policy makers	High	High	Collaborate
Donors	High -Project funding and technical support	High	Medium	Collaborate
Private sector, CSOs, Academia	Medium -Implementation partners	Medium	Medium	Inform

Stakeholder Engagement Levels

The results of the stakeholder's analysis will inform the desired level of engagement for each PMO stakeholder. It is important that this process be undertaken as collaboratively and as objectively as possible. Project managers and other competent staff should support the PMO in this analysis. Ultimately each stakeholder will be assigned one of four engagement levels as shown in Chart 20:

Chart 20 Proposed Levels of PMO Stakeholder Engagement (Source: Author, 2025)

Engagement Level	Purpose	Example Method
Inform	Awareness	Dashboards, reports
Consult	Feedback	Surveys, consultations
Collaborate	Joint delivery	Project Working groups
Empower	Decision-making	Project Steering committees

Strategic Alignment

A key function of the PMO is to promote alignment within an organisation. The PMO Stakeholder Management Plan should support PMO stakeholder engagement planning explicitly aligned with the following:

- OECS Treaty mandates and Commission strategic priorities
- Member State sectoral and programme priorities

- Donor requirements and regional partner frameworks

Process 3: Manage Stakeholder Engagement

Objective

To actively engage stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of PMO-supported initiatives, building trust, managing expectations, and enabling collaboration.

The following measures are proposed as key strategies for engaging stakeholders

Internal Engagement Strategies

- Quarterly executive portfolio briefings and KPI dashboards
- Cross-department coordination using standardized reporting templates
- Capacity-building workshops and Communities of Practice
- Monthly PMO communications (newsletters, intranet updates)

External Engagement Strategies

- Member State relationship model using focal points and annual outreach
- Structured donor coordination through joint planning and harmonized reporting
- Public PMO visibility and communication aimed at showcasing PMO impact
- Regional coordination through MoUs and joint programming mechanisms

To ensure that the stakeholder engagement strategies are properly documented it is recommended that the PMO stakeholder records include the desired engagement level and engagement strategy for each stakeholder as per table Chart 21.

Chart 21 Proposed Template For Documentation of Stakeholder Engagement Needs (Source: Author, 2025)

Project/Programme						
Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Agency	Contact person	Role/Relationship to project	Interest/power	Desired engagement level	Engagement strategy

Lifecycle Coverage

It is envisioned that stakeholder engagement will occur across all aspects of the project lifecycle as can be seen in Chart 22.

Chart 22 Stakeholder Engagement and Project Lifecycle (Source: Author, 2025)

Project Lifecyle Phase	PMO Stakeholder Engagement
Initiation	Expectation Mapping
Planning	Consultation and Alignment
Execution	Collaboration and Co-delivery
Monitoring	Feedback and Issue Resolution
Closure	Lessons Learned and Sustainability Planning

Process 4: Monitor Stakeholder Engagement

Objective

To evaluate engagement effectiveness and adapt strategies as stakeholder needs and project contexts evolve.

Monitoring Mechanisms

The following interventions are proposed for monitoring:

- Regular review of stakeholder satisfaction and expectations through surveys
- Maintenance of stakeholder registers and engagement logs
- Stakeholder engagement scorecards
- Integration of lessons learned into PMO knowledge systems

Indicative Stakeholder KPIs

Below are some proposed KPIs that can be utilized:

- Number of coordinated stakeholder consultations
- Percentage of projects with documented stakeholder engagement plans
- Stakeholder satisfaction scores
- Frequency of joint decision-making forums
- Member State and partner feedback ratings

It is expected that monitoring results will inform continuous improvement and recalibration as part of the stakeholder management plan.

4.4.6 Governance, Roles, and Resources

It is expected that the roll out of the stakeholder management plan will be supported by the requisite resources both in terms of human resources and financing, for example for in-person meetings.

Roles

- **PMO Head:** Overall strategy and leadership engagement
- **Stakeholder Engagement Officer (to be recruited):** Day-to-day coordination, mapping, maintenance of stakeholder registers and monitoring
- **Project Managers:** Project-level stakeholder engagement execution
- **Communications Unit:** Public messaging and branding alignment

Resources

- Dedicated human resource support within the PMO
- Digital tools (stakeholder registers, dashboards, knowledge repositories)
- Budget for Member State engagement, consultations, and outreach activities

4.4.7 Stakeholder Management Activities by Phase

Improvement of stakeholder engagement will require sufficient time given the processes involved. The overall PMO Enhancement ImplementationPlan described in 4,3 indicated a milestone 2.4 Stakeholder Engagement Fully Activated by month 11. The proposed stakeholder management plan, which is essentially a subcomponent of the PMO

Enhancement Implementation Plan, is designed to be operationalized within 18 months and in 3 phases. The key activities for each phase are outlined below:

PMO Stakeholder Management Plan Phase 1 (Months 0–6): Establish Stakeholder Engagement

The first phase seeks to initiate active and sustained stakeholder in a structured way giving consideration to the organisational context, organisational process assets and culture. This phase focuses on the Identify Stakeholders and Plan Stakeholder Engagement processes. Activities in this phase set the foundation and establish the baseline for the other phases and include:

- Conduct PMO stakeholder identification and analysis using recommended tools and techniques described in 4.4.5
- Stakeholder and communication plans
- PMO sensitization workshops
- Baseline stakeholder KPIs

PMO Stakeholder Management Plan Phase 2 (Months 6–12): Activate and Embed

The second phase seeks to activate and embed Stakeholder Management improvement processes across the organisation. The focus is on the Manage Stakeholder Engagement process and structured execution and coordination. Activities build on those from Phase 1 and include:

- Member State and donor engagement execution
- Internal coordination and Community of Practice
- Ongoing PMO engagement feedback and Stakeholder Management KPI tracking
- PMO visibility and success stories

PMO Stakeholder Management Plan Phase 3 (Months 12–18): Optimize and sustain PMO stakeholder engagement

Phase 3 looks to examine the impact and outcomes of the activities in phases 1 and 2 and to refine and leverage them for successful operations of the PMO. There is a strong focus on the Monitor Stakeholder Engagement process, institutionalization and continuous improvement. Activities include:

- Stakeholder satisfaction reassessment

- Institutionalization of engagement practices
- Lessons learned and plan update
- Strategic partnerships strengthened

4.4.8 Stakeholder Management Risk Mitigation

The stakeholder management plan must address the issue of risk management, particularly as the PMO is working with several categories of stakeholders. Some of the potential risks that could impact the success of the implementation plan are highlighted in Chart 23.

The risk assessment should be reviewed on a quarterly basis, where possible in consultation with project teams. The probability and impacted ratings should be updated as the need arises. These can be undertaken through joint workshops with project teams.

Chart 23 Key Risks to PMO Stakeholder Management (Source: Author, 2025)

Risk	Probability	Impact	Proposed Mitigation Measure
Inadequate PMO personnel to undertake stakeholder engagement	High	Medium	Work with communications and project teams to deliver various aspects of the engagement plan
Some stakeholders are inaccessible for engagement	Medium	Medium	Develop flexibility in the timing and approach to engage stakeholders, lobby the support of influential people to speak on behalf of PMO
Donor requirements dominate engagements	Medium	Medium	Reiterate engagement priorities, harmonise reporting where possible,
Poor documentation of stakeholder engagement decisions/feedback	Medium	Medium	Maintain stakeholder register and engagements logs, record decisions and feedback systematically and disseminate through communication plan

4.4.9 CANARI-Informed Recommendations for Strengthening PMO Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is an integral part of the work OECS Commission. Although the PMO may have limitations with stakeholder engagement, the Commission has had noted success in this regard particularly in the field of environmental sustainability. The PMO can benefit from best practices and transferable lessons to support its stakeholder management plan. The OECS Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, developed with technical support from Caribbean Natural Resources Institute, CANARI, for example , provides a structured framework for engaging diverse stakeholders in OECS initiatives through inclusive, participatory, and context-sensitive approaches. The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (SES) aims to support a targeted and strategic approach to engagement of civil society and private sector in environmental governance and management in the OECS to support equitable, effective, and meaningful participation in decision-making at all levels (CANARI, 2021).

The strategy emphasizes early and continuous engagement, recognition of differing stakeholder capacities and influence, transparent feedback mechanisms, and the integration of stakeholder perspectives into decision-making processes. It is particularly grounded in principles of participatory governance, equity, and sustainability, reflecting the OECS Commission’s mandate to promote regional cooperation, resilience, and long-term development outcomes.

The SES provides a strong foundation for the PMO Stakeholder Management Plan because both instruments share common objectives: improving coordination, strengthening ownership among Member States and partners, and enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of OECS interventions. The OECS Stakeholder Engagement Strategy highlights proven regional practices and principles that can be operationalized by the PMO through structured stakeholder identification, tailored engagement planning, active engagement management, and continuous monitoring consistent with PMI’s stakeholder management processes. Aligning the PMO Stakeholder Management Plan with the OECS Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will promote coherence between project delivery practices and broader institutional approaches to stakeholder engagement. This will in turn strengthen governance and accountability, resulting in increased likelihood of successful project and programme outcomes.

The key lessons for the PMO Stakeholder Management Plan are:

a) Move from Consultation to Co-Creation

The PMO should progressively shift engagement with Member States, regional partners, and beneficiaries from periodic consultation to structured co-creation and joint problem-solving, particularly for complex and sustainability-focused projects.

b) Differentiate Engagement Approaches by Stakeholder Capacity

PMO engagement strategies should be tailored to reflect differences in institutional capacity of stakeholder groups, avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches.

c) Strengthen Feedback Loops

The PMO should institutionalize mechanisms to demonstrate how stakeholder input influences decisions, including documenting responses to feedback and communicating outcomes transparently.

d) Integrate Engagement with Governance

Stakeholder engagement outputs should be systematically linked to PMO governance and decision-making structures, ensuring that stakeholder perspectives inform portfolio prioritisation and risk management.

e) Elevate Community and Beneficiary Voices

For environmental sustainability and regenerative development projects, the PMO should ensure that community-level stakeholders are consistently and meaningfully engaged throughout the project lifecycle.

f) Build Internal Capacity for Engagement

Targeted training and support should be provided to PMO staff and Project Managers to strengthen facilitation, participatory engagement, and conflict management skills.

g) Monitor Engagement Quality and Outcomes

Stakeholder monitoring should move beyond activity tracking to assess engagement quality, trust, and contribution in order to improve project delivery and sustainability outcomes.

4.4.10 Overview of Proposed Stakeholder Management Framework

The maturity survey results clearly underscored the need to strengthen the PMO stakeholder engagement. Clear commitment and decisive action is required to address this limitation. Effective stakeholder engagement is integral to OECS regional integration, sustainable development and project success. The PMO must as a matter of urgency address the management of both internal and external stakeholders' expectations. The key elements of the Stakeholder Management Plan presented above must be owned and communicated by the senior leadership of the Commision and the PMO. The stakeholder management plan can be summarized in the following 5 steps:

1) Stakeholder Identification and Expectation Mapping aimed at confirming the stated and unstated expectations of the stakeholders with regard to the PMO operations.
2) Stakeholder Management Alignment and Prioritisation aimed at addressing stakeholders expectations within the context of the PMO's mandate, resources and capacity
3) Structured stakeholder engagement via appropriately determined measures and channels
4) Monitoring and Adjustments of stakeholder engagements informed by evidence-based performance results
5) Continual PMO Learning and Institutionalisation for Stakeholder Management in support of improvements.

4.5 The PMO Communication Management Plan

4.5.1 Background

Analysis of the responses from the surveys and interviews shows a clear need for enhanced communication on the part of the OECS PMO. Given the critical role of the PMO, there is need for effective communication, particularly for the internal stakeholders at the Commission. The proposed communication plan, as part of this research, will ensure that the information from the PMO is disseminated in a structured and appropriate manner. The purpose of this Communication Plan is to support the successful implementation of the OECS PMO Enhancement Roadmap by ensuring clear, consistent, timely, and targeted communication with all PMO stakeholders. The plan responds directly to PMO maturity assessment findings which highlighted gaps in PMO visibility, role clarity, stakeholder understanding, consistency of reporting, and feedback mechanisms.

Currently, the PMO operates an internal platform on the intranet for sharing information with the Commission. Although there is no regular dissemination of PMO information, notices of upcoming meetings of the PROF are shared. This proposed Communication Plan directly addresses these gaps particularly with respect to regular updates as part of the PMO strengthening effort.

4.5.2 PMO Communication Plan Goal

To establish a structured, transparent, and effective approach to assist the OECS PMO in communicating with internal and external stakeholders to improve awareness of the PMO's role and activities, foster collaboration and promote a culture of accountability and results-based management.

4.5.3 PMO Communication Plan Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the plan are aimed at addressing the weaknesses identified in 4.2 are as follows:

1) To build awareness amongst PMO stakeholders to support a better understanding of the PMO's role, services and value for greater collaboration and uptake
2) Support adoption of PMO standards, processes, and governance mechanisms
3) Strengthen trust and collaboration with Member States and development partners
4) Reinforce results-based management, value for money, and sustainability messaging
5) Enable two-way communication and continuous feedback
6) To support transparency on project delivery through timely, clear and accurate communication of project results and data for decision-making.

4.5.4 Communication Needs Assessment

The OECS PMO maturity assessment highlighted the following communication-related challenges:

- Limited shared understanding of the PMO's mandate, authority, and value proposition
- Inconsistent communication among the PMO, technical units, and Member States
- Ad hoc donor and leadership reporting rather than structured, predictable updates

- Limited feedback loops to demonstrate how stakeholder input informs decision-makingUnderutilization of communication channels/ mechanisims to reinforce PMO successes and lessons learned

The various stakeholders of the PMO have different communications needs as outlined in Chart 24. The communication plan must cater to individual specific requirements.

Chart 24 Communication Needs of PMO Stakeholders (Source: Author, 2025)

PMO Stakeholder	Communication Need
Director and Leadership Team	Strategic project updates, portfolio performance, risk and impact summaries.
Department Directors and Project Managers	Project alignment, status updates, resource coordination.
Project Teams and Officers	Operational guidance, templates, tools, lessons learned.
Functional Units	Integration points and procedural clarity.

4.5.5 Core PMO Communication Messages

Whilst it is important for the PMO to share information with its stakeholders, it must decide on the most useful and appropriate messages to communicate. Based on the responses of the Maturity Assessment and the interviews the following key messages are proposed:

Messages on PMO Purpose: The OECS PMO is vital to ensure that the projects undertaken by the Commission are designed and implemented based on quality results, consistency and accountability.

Messages on PMO Value: The PMO is an accessible resource that empowers the OECS Commission to deliver projects efficiently and in alignment with OECS priorities.

Messages on Transparency: The PMO will support the sharing of information on progress, challenges, and lessons learned to strengthen regional impact.

Messages on Collaboration: The PMO promotes effective teamwork across departments through strong functional cooperation.

4.5.6 Resources for the Communication Plan

It is important to consider the resources needed for the communication plan to ensure successful delivery. The resources needed include:

People: Personnel required to implement communication plan

Materials: Resources such as paper, ink, and other promotional materials to increase visibility.

Tools and Equipment: Items used for communication production such as cameras and drones.

Information Technology Systems: The project management information systems that support, facilitate and track communications.

4.5.7 Proposed Roles and Responsibilities

Different stakeholders are expected to support the PMO Communication plan as shown below:

Head of PMO -Overall communication leadership

PMO Team -Content development and reporting

Project Managers -Project-level information sharing

OECS Communications Unit Branding, public messaging

OECS Leadership Team - Message endorsement and advocacy

4.5.8 Communication Strategy and Channels

The Communication channels must be aligned to the Commission's organisational structure and Caribbean communication norms. Effective PMO communication should be conducted through a structured mix of formal and informal communication channels designed to ensure clarity, consistency, and timely information flow across all stakeholder groups. The PMO will utilize standardized reporting instruments such as executive dashboards, portfolio performance reports, and progress briefs to support evidence-based decision-making by senior management and development partners. On the other hand, regular coordination meetings and workshops will facilitate two-way communication with project teams and technical units, enabling collaboration, issue resolution, and continuous learning.

With respect to external communication, channels include Member State coordination calls, donor briefings, and public-facing communication products. These will be used to promote transparency, alignment, and accountability. Digital platforms such as shared document repositories and intranet resources will continue to support accessibility and consistency of information. Feedback mechanisms will ensure that stakeholder input is captured and integrated into PMO decision-making. The use of WhatsApp groups, storytelling and impact campaigns are also seen as an important part of the communication plan. Collectively, these channels ensure that communication supports both operational efficiency and strategic positioning of the PMO within the OECS Commission. Communication frequency will also have to be clearly defined.

4.5.9 Communication Activities by Phase

It is important to note that the PMO is already doing some communication and that the structured PMO communication will first build on what already exists and introduce complementary activities to enhance its communication activities for greater impact.

PMO Communication Plan Phase 1: Awareness and Alignment (Months 1–6)

The first phase seeks to build awareness and alignment and centers on sensitization of the role of the PMO and sustainability projects. Activities in this phase set the foundation for the other phases and include:

- Launch PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan communication
- Conduct PMO sensitization workshops
- Clarify PMO mandate, roles, and expectations
- Introduce Green Project Management and RBM concepts through various media
- Establish standard reporting formats and schedules for project teams
- Utilise existing media and channels at the Commission for information sharing e,g the OECS Greenlink and regular departmental meetings

PMO Communication Plan Phase 2: Engagement and Adoption of Communication Measures (Months 7–12)

The communication activities in this phase 2 centre on building relationships and activating regular communication. The main activities under this phase include:

- Regular portfolio dashboards and progress updates
- Promote PMO success stories and early wins

- Strengthen Member State and donor communication
- Implement stakeholder feedback mechanisms
- Reinforce compliance through consistent messaging
- Partner with Communications Unit particularly communication specialists assigned to projects

PMO Communication Plan Phase 3: Consolidation and Strategic Positioning (Months 13–24)

In phase 3 the communication plan seeks to demonstrate results and potential benefits from enhanced communication. Key activities under this phase build on those of phase 2 and include:

- Enhance PMO reporting into leadership decision cycles
- Showcase sustainability and regenerative outcomes
- Communicate maturity improvements and lessons learned
- Support continuous improvements for communications

4.5.10 Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication Effectiveness

It is also important to monitor the effectiveness of the communication plan and to measure progress towards set goals. Indicative communication KPIs will therefore be necessary. Proposed indicators include:

- Percentage of stakeholders who understand PMO mandate

- Timeliness of PMO reports
- Stakeholder satisfaction with communication
- Attendance at PMO briefings and workshops
- Visits to PMO intranet portal
- Reduction in ad hoc information requests

Success indicators may include:

- ≥75% of staff report being "well informed" about PMO activities.
- ≥75% of project staff report regular use of PMO templates and tools.

Results will be reviewed quarterly and used to refine communication approaches. It is also important to obtain regular feedback from stakeholders on the communication plan. This can be achieved using annual PMO communication surveys, online feedback forms and departmental consultations. The PMO already has in place measures for post-workshop evaluations, and these should also be utilized.

4.5.11 Communication Risk Mitigation

The Communication plan should proactively address risks issues that could affect successful implementation. The key risk that could arise and proposed mitigation measures are highlighted in Chart 25. The impact and probability of the risk are also highlighted.

Chart 25 PMO Communication Plan Risk Assessment (Source: Author, 2025)

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Measure
Low staff engagement	Medium	High	Use innovative, visual means that require little time to assimilate information
Information overload	Medium	Medium	Use concise means, explore synergies and joint initiatives
Limited resources for PMO communication	High	Medium	Partner with projects and communication unit

5 CONCLUSIONS

The research confirmed the need for strengthening the PMO to support the OECS Commission and was able to identify the key limitations of the PMO and to propose some strategic measures to address those. The PMO maturity assessment proved to be a valuable tool as it allowed for examination of several areas of the PMOs operations. The assessment does have some limitations such as the small sample size and subjectivity factor. The use of semi-structured interviews complemented and supplemented the OPM3 providing more information on certain areas and generated ideas for consideration in developing recommendations for improving the PMO. Additionally, observations of the operations by the author and literature reviews provided the basis for the researcher to propose credible, tailor-made solutions. The following conclusions were drawn:

a. Since its establishment in 2019, the OECS PMO has added considerable value to the organization. It is functioning effectively, brings value to the Commission and its Member States and is continuing to improve along its path to maturity. The PMO has legitimacy and visibility within the Commission and there are governance structures and reporting mechanisms in place. Technology and Tools for project management provide a solid foundation for portfolio visibility and is a major strength for the PMO.

In general, the organisational culture is receptive to project management discipline.

b. While the OECS Commission has established foundational project management practices, the evolving complexity of regional development initiatives, increasing donor expectations, and heightened sustainability imperatives necessitate a more strategically positioned and mature PMO.

c. The research data show that PMO stakeholder engagement is not systematic and communication planning is weak. Although project management data are produced, they are not always translated into action. Furthermore, perceived PMO value is uneven which results in uneven adoption of PMO promoted practices. Hence, the adoption and institutionalisation of existing standards and tools for project management depend heavily on individuals rather than embedded systems, limiting the PMO's ability to fully realise its value across the project portfolio.

d. The research also indicates that the PMO is operating below its true potential largely due to structural and capacity constraints. The PMO has undergone some recent structural changes that have reduced the number of staff in the PMO, even though the actual number of Project Managers in the Commission has not changed. It is likely that capacity constraints may be the root cause of many other weaknesses, including inconsistent standard application, limited engagement, and uneven effectiveness. The OECS Commission PMO has the appropriate project management systems but lack the requisite staffing numbers and engagement capacity to fulfill its mandate. Consequently, even though the right intentions and plans exist, these alone are not sufficient and PMO personnel are required to advance and implement them.

e. There is a need to revisit the authority of the PMO towards empowerment of more control so that it does not play merely a supportive or advisory role. A hybrid PMO which combines appropriate elements of a supportive and controlling PMO may meet the specific needs and requirements of the organization. Project complexity, organisational culture, and strategic objectives of the Commission should be considered in this regard.

f. Advancing the OECS PMO to the next level of maturity requires some strategic, targeted and well-designed measures – grounded in project management best practices. In response to the limitations and challenges identified, this study proposed interventions in governance and strategic alignment, stakeholder engagement, communication, performance measurement, and the systematic integration of sustainability considerations into project management practices. A phased PMO Enhancement Implementation Plan can effectively incorporate these interventions in a coherent and structured manner for ease of implementation. This should be supported by a tailored KPI framework that provides the mechanism through which progress is monitored, value is demonstrated, learning is institutionalised, and the PMO's contribution to OECS strategic and sustainability objectives is made visible and credible.

g. The research further proposes that the enhancement plan should address PMO capacity and the fundamentals of project management skills first as a priority. Given that the absence of a strong communication plan and weak feedback mechanisms affect stakeholder understanding of the PMO role and value, there should also be strong parallel efforts to institutionalize and measure stakeholder engagement and communication.

h. To facilitate enhanced coordination the PMO could seek to develop tools such as dependency maps for joint initiatives and coordination protocols that address areas such as cross-unit meetings, resource allocation, escalation procedures for projects implemented across divisions. Enhanced reporting is needed for supporting performance intelligence or insight for decision-making at the Commission.

i. With these above-mentioned measures successfully implemented, the OECS PMO can transition from a predominantly operational support function to a strategic partner that enables value-based decision-making, results-based management outcomes and sustainable projects.

j. The KPIs monitoring framework for the PMO enhancement implementation can be adopted and adapted by the OECS Commission to address all the limitations outlined above identified in the survey results as shown in the Chart 26.

k. The PMO is well- positioned to mature further to bring additional benefit to the organization and its external stakeholders. Ultimately, the successful implementation of the proposed recommendations will depend on sustained leadership commitment, adequate resourcing, and a culture of continuous improvement. If adopted, the proposed PMO enhancement framework has the potential to significantly improve project delivery effectiveness and efficiency at the OECS Commission, while positioning the organisation to respond proactively to emerging regional and global development challenges.

l. The research therefore supports the hypothesis ‘Redefinition of the role and functions of the Project Management Office at the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission will support the organisation to better plan, execute, monitor and close sustainable projects for the Eastern Caribbean region. This can be achieved by the establishment of the strategic hybrid enterprise PMO.

Chart 26 OECS PMO KPI Alignment (Source: Author, 2025)

Problem	Dimension	Baseline	3-Year Target	Indicator
Weak Governance Authority	PMO Mandate Compliance	Inconsistent application of PMO standards across departments	≥ 90% compliance with PMO governance framework	% projects compliant with approved PMO standards
	PMO Maturity Level	Level 1-2 (Initial/Ad hoc)	Level 2–3 (Managed / Defined)	OPM3 maturity assessment score
Low Stakeholder Engagement	PMO Stakeholder Satisfaction	No formal baseline established (Year 1 survey required)	≥ 3.5/5 average satisfaction OR 30% improvement from baseline	Stakeholder satisfaction index (internal & external survey)
	PMO Awareness	Limited understanding of PMO role across departments	≥ 80% of staff demonstrate understanding of PMO mandate	% staff correctly identifying PMO role and services
	Communication Timeliness	Ad hoc communication delivery	≥ 95% planned communications delivered on schedule	Communication timeliness rate
Inconsistent Adoption of Standards	Template Utilization	Partial use of PM templates	≥ 95% projects using standardized templates	% projects using approved reporting templates
	Performance Compliance	Schedule and cost variance inconsistently monitored	≥ 85% projects within agreed schedule and cost tolerance	% projects within approved variance threshold
	Lessons Learned Capture	Lessons documented inconsistently	100% completed projects submit lessons learned	% closed projects with documented lessons uploaded
Weak Cross-Department Coordination	Portfolio Reporting Discipline	Reporting inconsistent across departments	≥ 90% on-time submission of standardized reports	On-time portfolio reporting rate
	Coordination Forums	No formal coordination schedule	Minimum 4 cross-department coordination forums annually	# cross-department coordination meetings
Capacity Constraints	Training Participation	< 50% of project staff provided with training	≥ 85% project staff trained annually	PM training participation rate
	Staffing Adequacy	1	2	# of PMO personnel
Sustainability Treated as Add-On	Sustainability KPI Integration	Sustainability indicators not systematically applied	≥ 60% projects integrate sustainability indicators	% projects reporting at least one sustainability KPI

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and the conclusions drawn the study puts forwards 11 recommendations for the OECS Commission. The recommendations are derived from the findings of the research which analysed the current efficiency, effectiveness and maturity of the PMO at the OECS Commission. The study shows that while the organization has made important strides in strengthening its project management practices, the PMO operates at an early stage of maturity with some institutional and operational gaps. The recommendations below aim to strengthen the governance, operations, capacity and strategic role of the PMO with the Commission. The recommendations also support the integration of sustainability considerations into the project management practices to enhance the effectiveness and long-terms impacts of the projects undertaken by the Commission.

1) Strategic Strengthening and Repositioning of the PMO

Strengthening the institutional role and repositioning of the PMO will address the limited institutional authority and visibility within the organisation. The OECS Commission should formally reposition the PMO as a strategic partner rather than a primarily administrative support function. This could be undertaken through a revision and formal approval of a PMO Charter that clearly redefines the PMO’s mandate, authority, and role in strategic planning, portfolio prioritisation, and early project design. Such repositioning will enhance the PMO's ability to add more value at both project and organisational levels.

It is recommended that the OECS Commission establishes a hybrid PMO tailored for the Commission with both governance and advisory responsibilities across the organization. The proposed new structure should enable the PMO to provide strategic guidance on project design, ensure alignment the the Commission's strategic priorities, and facilitate standardization of project management practices across divisions. This intervention will enhance the delivery of projects, reduce implementation risks and support sustainbility objectives.

2) Capacity Building for PMO and Project Staff

The study results indicate that the current PMO operates with limited human resources relative to the current number of and complexity of projects implemented by the organization. Given the anticipated increase in numbers of projects to be undertaken by the OECS Commission, strengthening the capacity of the PMO through additional staff will be critical to ensuring effective project oversight and support. The study recommends that the OECS Commission expands the staffing of the PMO to include additional project management who have qualifications and experience in portfolio management, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainability. The OECS Commission should also explore other interim options as budgetary constraints may result in a waiting time for hiring and onboarding new personnel. Leveraging existing resources to strategically support the PMO may be a beneficial approach.

The OECS Commission should also implement a structured professional development programme for existing PMO staff and Project Managers, including training in project management fundamentals, sustainability-oriented project delivery, and relevant professional certifications. The training should also extend to core technical staff who implement project-like interventions but are not part of a funded project. Communities of practice and mentoring should also be encouraged to support continuous learning.

3) Enhanced Governance and Standardization of Project Management Practices

The research results also indicate inconsistencies in the application of project management tools, procedures and reporting practices across projects implemented by the Commission. It is recommended that the PMO strengthen its role in establishing standardised project management frameworks and procedures for the organisation. Specific measures should include the development and adoption of an agreed organisational project management toolkit incorporating standard templates for project planning, reporting, risk management, stakeholder management, and lessons learned documentation. The consistent application of this tooolkit will facilitate improved coordination across project teams, easier monitoring of project performance, and support the generation of more comprehensive portfolio-level data on projects.

4) Enhancement of Performance Measurement and Value-Based Management

To address the issue of limitations in reporting, monitoring and data collection, the PMO should strengthen performance measurement by adopting a concise set of key performance indicators as part of a portfolio -level monitoring and performance measurement framework. The indicators should be aligned with results-based management (RBM) and value-for-money (VfM) principles. Adoption of these indicators should enable the monitoring of efficiency, effectiveness, benefits realisation, and sustainability outcomes, thereby strengthening accountability to senior management and development partners. The use of an appropriate monitoring framework will also allow the Commission to identify the lessons learned and best practices from completed projects to support continued organisational learning.

5) Institutionalisation of Sustainability and Regenerative Development

The study recommends the systematic integration of sustainability and regenerative development principles into the project lifecycle through recognised frameworks such as the Green Project Management (GPM) P5 Standard. The PMO should lead the development of sustainability criteria, indicators, and reporting requirements to ensure that projects deliver long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits in alignment with OECS regional priorities. This could be done on a pilot basis for gradual adoption across the organization.

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6) Formalisation of Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

The research results highlighted a strong need for improved communication and engagement between the PMO and its internal stakeholders within the Commission. The study therefore recommends that the structured stakeholder management and communication plans proposed for the PMO should be adopted. These plans should incorporate lessons from the OECS Stakeholder Engagement Strategy developed with CANARI and should promote inclusive, transparent, and context-sensitive engagement with Member States, development partners, and beneficiaries,

The PMO would benefit from improved access to the feedback from external stakeholders like project beneficiaries. The PMO's participation in high level OECS meetings, such as Ministerial Councils, as well as project meetings, would enhance its ability to better understand and contribute to project design and delivery.

7) Adoption of a Phased and Adaptive Implementation Approach

The implementation of PMO enhancements should follow a phased and adaptive roadmap that allows for incremental maturity growth and organisational learning. Regular PMO assessments, feedback mechanisms, and lessons-learned reviews should be institutionalised to ensure that improvements remain responsive to changing organisational and external conditions.

8) **Build PMO Champions and Advocates**

The PMO would benefit from a champion and advocates who can engage different stakeholders and demonstrate the value of the PMO's work. This would help improve understanding of the PMO's role and value and support wider adoption of project management best practices.

9) Benchmarking and Sharing with other Government PMOs

The operations of the OECS Commission PMO should be benchmarked against similar international and regional PMOs for effective comparison and transfer of lessons learned. The lessons learned from implementing a PMO in the OECS should be shared with other similar entities.

10) Undertake Comprehensive and Planned Reviews of PMO

A maturity assessment was undertaken at the Commission at the time of establishing the PMO. There have been no additional maturity assesssments at the Commission since then. Regular maturity assessments should be conducted at the Commission to provide the opportunity to objectively assess the PMO's performance. These assessments could be aligned with the Commission's triennium planning activities which review the organisational strategic priorities. The assessment should involve a bigger sample than that used in this research and should also include the leadership team and external stakeholders to get a full range of views. In addition, given that this research showed that project management resources and standards are in place but not always adopted further research should investigate the reasons for the uneven adoption of the project management practices. This information will be useful for informing remediation strategies for the PMO.

11) Future Studies Needed

Future research could build on this study by examining the long-term impact of PMO maturity improvements on project sustainability outcomes and regional development effectiveness within intergovernmental organisations.

7 VALIDATION OF THE FGP IN THE FIELD OF REGENERATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Introduction

Although, Sustainable development lacks a single detailed and widely accepted definition, it is generally accepted as an approach to social, economic, and environmental planning that attempts to balance the social and economic needs of present and future human generations with the imperative of preserving, or preventing undue damage to, the natural environment. This advances the definition put forward by the Brundtland Report (also called Our Common Future), which introduced the concept of sustainable development—defining it as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" in 1987 (Kulik, 2025).

Sustainable development incorporates three equally important pillars: Environmental Sustainability, Social Sustainability and Economic Sustainability. Working together, these pillars help ensure that development is balanced—not just profitable or people-focused, but also planet-conscious. If one of these pillars is ignored, this can lead to short-term gains but long-term problems. The Environmental Sustainability pillar focuses on preserving the natural world including our air, water, soil, forests, biodiversity, and climate ensuring that human activities do not deplete or permanently damage natural resources. It recognises the need for a healthy environment for life on earth to continue. The Social Sustainability pillar addresses the creation of inclusive, safe, and fair societies where every individual has access to basic rights, opportunities, and a high quality of life. Social sustainability seeks to reduce inequality, support vulnerable groups, and ensure that development reaches the grassroots. The Economic Sustainability pillar addresses the ability to support long-term economic growth without negatively impacting social or environmental well-being. It advocates for development strategies that are stable, inclusive, and resource-efficient. It is based on the recognition that an economy that thrives at the cost of nature or society will collapse. Economic sustainability ensures that growth is inclusive, responsible, and future-oriented, creating decent work opportunities and reducing dependency on non-renewable resources (Icecdadmin, 2025).

Sustainable Development is frequently understood to include the following (Kulik, 2025):

- A global perspective on social, economic, and environmental policies that takes into account the needs of future generations
- A recognition of the instrumental value of a sound natural environment, including the importance of biodiversity
- The protection and appreciation of the needs of Indigenous cultures
- The cultivation of economic and social equity in societies throughout the world
- The responsible and transparent implementation of government policies

Sustainable Development is important as we need to balance our need for growth and development with our need to maintain and protect our environment and to ensure social development is not neglected when we pursue economic development. There are several global developmental and environmental challenges which demand urgent attention as we continue to pursue economic goals. These include climate change, freshwater depletion, ocean over-fishing, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, water and air pollution and hunger. Sustainable development is crucial as it focuses on improving human-environment interaction by prioritizing the management and protection of the earth's natural resources for future generations, as well as for the millions of other species on our planet. At the intersection of economic growth, environmental integrity and societal wellbeing, sustainable development charts a path towards a world where humans and nature coexist harmoniously. Sustainable Development promotes stable economic growth, conservation of natural resources, environmental protection and social progress and equality, and this can lead to conservation and enhancement of our natural resources so that all countries can meet basic needs of employment, food, energy, water and sanitation (Willsher, 2023). Development based on Green Economy and the Doughnut Economy models represent more sustainable approaches for growth and development.

Regenerative Development has emerged as an enhanced approach for projects that address some of the most critical global problems. It uses a variety of specific methods, techniques, and technologies that are locally adapted to achieve its overarching goals of creating regenerative capacity and manifesting ever-increasing potential. These include many accepted approaches, such as multifunctional landscapes, design experiments, safe-to-fail experiments, adaptive design, parametric design, biomimicry, biophilia, and permaculture (Gibbons, Cloutier, Coseo, & Barakat, 2018).

Regenerative development provides a more holistic approach and hence compensates for some of the shortcomings of the sustainable development approach. Many of the developmental problems that are being experienced such as the effects of climate change, biodiversity loss and poverty are complex in nature and hence finding the appropriate solutions requires a systems approach and the contributions from a range of stakeholders at different levels and across various sectors of society working in tandem.This is the approach put forward by the regenerative development concept. Regenerative development builds on the foundation of sustainable development and through a more inclusive, comprehensive process seeks to activate the regenerative process of the earth under six main areas. Regenerative development promotes the inclusion of Political, Cultural and Spiritual dimensions to development in addition to Environmental, Social, Economic considerations (Müller, 2017).

Recognising the additional benefits of both the sustainable development and regenerative development approaches, it would be useful to ensure that the principles of these approaches are factored into the project management practices of the Commission from project development to closure. The Scope management plan addresses how the project is defined, developed, monitored, controlled and validated. The process of incorporating sustainable development and regenerative development considerations into project management should be started as early as possible and it would be best if this was captured as an objective as part of the project charter so that all stakeholders including the sponsor are aware and buy-in to this approach. In preparing the project scope statement and the work breakdown structure (WBS) there should be clear references and alignments to the six processes of regenerative development, for example. This means that where possible the work packages should reflect effort under these processes. It is also important that project documentation clearly speaks to sustainable development and/or regenerative development.

Regenerative development and sustainable development considerations should be included in cost management. However, it is also important to remember that the earned value for regenerative development projects should be viewed differently as regenerative projects are still relatively new and may run into some overspending above what is planned but the long-term results are worth it.

Both sustainable development and regenerative development are aligned with the approach for development necessary for small islands states such as those in the OECS. These approaches support the Islands Systems Management (ISM) Framework which recognises that, despite physical and natural resource limitations, integrated planning and management is critical if the islands are to become economically, socially and ecologically resilient (Mahadeo, 2022).

7.2 Relationship of the Project to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, are incorporated into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity which seeks to strengthen universal peace (United Nation Development Programme, N.D.). The 2020 agenda recognises that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The 17 SDGS are discussed in the context of this research project below.

Sustainable Development Goal 1 -No Poverty: This goal seeks the complete eradication of poverty in all its forms everywhere. This project supports the SDG 1 as the PMO will be expected to also support the economic projects being implemented by the OECS Commission which seek to address poverty. In general, all projects by the Commission should result in addressing poverty eradication for the OECS.

Sustainable Development Goal 2 -Zero Hunger: This goal seeks to end hunger, promote agriculture, and provide food for every person. The OECS commission undertakes projects in the areas of agriculture and food security. Furthermore, biodiversity and ocean related projects can also contribute to ending hunger. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 2.

Sustainable Development Goal 3 -Good Health and Well-being: This goal seeks to ensure health and provide care for everyone regardless of their age. The OECS Commission has a health unit and implements health projects. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 3.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 -Quality Education: This goal seeks to ensure quality education that is equitable and inclusive. The Commission has a dedicated education unit and in addition most of the projects delivered have a capacity building component which supports some level of education. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 4.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 -Gender Equality: This goal seeks to eradicate gender-based discrimination and empower all women. The OECS Commission projects often include a gender equality component. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 5.

Sustainable Development Goal 6 -Clean Water and Sanitation: This goal seeks to ensure and develop appropriate water supply and waste disposal systems. The Environmental Sustainability Division at the Commission implements both water and waste management projects. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 6.

Sustainable Development Goal 7 -Affordable and Clean Energy: This goal seeks to provide access to affordable, reliable and modern energy. The OECS Commission addresses this goal through the projects under the sustainable energy programme. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 7.

Sustainable Development Goal 8 -Decent Work and Economic Growth: This goal seeks to provide constant and inclusive enhancement of economic activities. The OECS Commission addresses this goal through the projects under the Economic Affairs and Regional Integration Development Division. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 8.

Sustainable Development Goal 9 -Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure: This goal seeks to develop resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. Though not always explicitly mentioned, this goals cuts across the work of the Commission, particularly under the Economic Affairs and Regional Integration Division and the Environmental Sustainability Division. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 9.

Sustainable Development Goal 10 -Reduced Inequalities: This goal seeks to decrease and eradicate the inequalities that exist. The OECS Commission addresses this through projects of the social development division and other projects delivered. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 10.

Sustainable Development Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities: This goal seeks to develop cities and communities that are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The work of the Commission addressing this goal is mainly captured in the work of the Social Development Division and the Environmental Sustainability Division. Hence, by supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 11.

Sustainable Development Goal 12 -Responsible Consumption and Production: This goal promotes patterns of consumption and production that are sustainable. It promotes resource efficiency, waste reduction and sustainable lifestyles. The work of the Commission addressing this goal is mainly captured in the work of the Environmental Sustainability Division. By supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 12.

Sustainable Development Goal 13- Climate Action: This goal calls for urgent efforts to combat climate change and its effects. The work of the Commission addressing this goal is mainly captured in the work of the Environmental Sustainability Division. By supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 13.

Sustainable Development Goal 14- Life Below Water: This goal seeks to protect and manage the oceans, seas, and marine resources. The work of the Commission addressing this goal is mainly captured in the work of the Environmental Sustainability Division. By supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 14.

Sustainable Development Goal 15- Life on Land: This goal seeks to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. The work of the Commission addressing this goal is mainly captured in the work of the Environmental Sustainability Division. By supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 15.

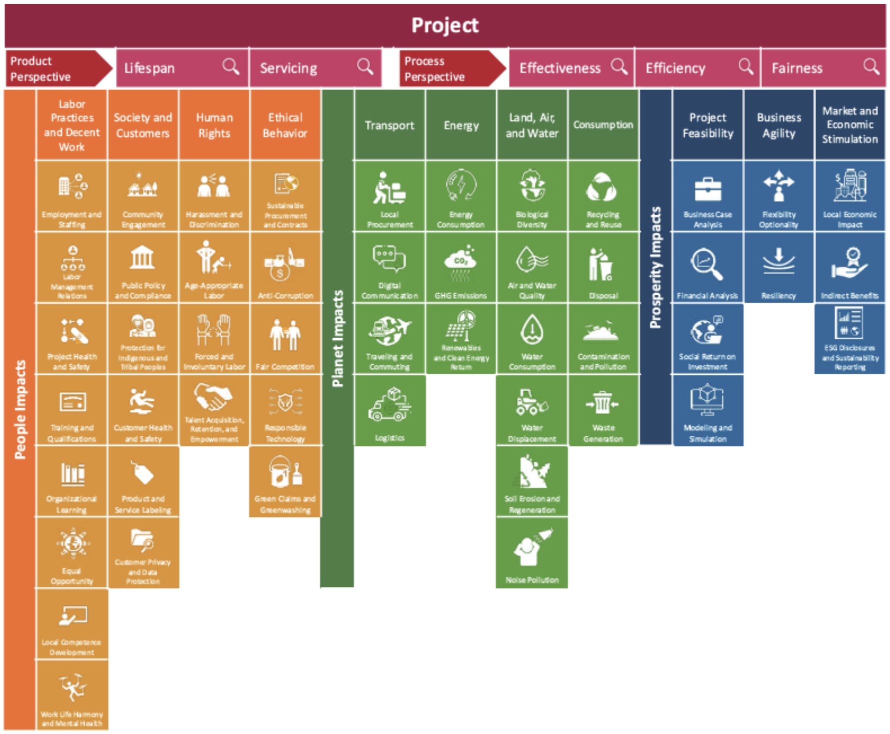
Sustainable Development Goal 16 -Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: This goal seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The work of the Commission addressing this goal is found through all its units. By supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 16.

Sustainable Development Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals: This goal seeks to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. The work of the Commission addressing this goal is found through all its units. By supporting an enhanced PMO for the OECS Commission the project supports SDG 17. This is facilitated by enhanced stakeholder management plan proposed by the project.

7.3 Analysis of the Project According to Standard P5

The Standard P5 is primarily an informative standard that provides guidance on what to measure and how to integrate P5 considerations into project activities. The standard is also used by sustainability professionals to include projects in their reporting by expanding the triple bottom line of People, Planet and Prosperity to include Product and Processes impacts.

Figure 16 P5 Standard Ontology (Source: Green Project Management, 2025)



Note. Adapted from "The P5 Standard for Sustainability in Project Management,"by Green Project Management, 2025

The P5 Standard's ontology shown in figure 16 encompasses a wide array of sustainability aspects, including environmental protection, social equity, and economic prosperity, which correspond to the 17 SDGs and their associated targets. The ontology which serves to manage complexity has three categories for classification, People, Planet and prosperity (Green Project Management, 2025). The categories are further broken down into subcategories and elements. The alignment with the 17 SDGs empowers project managers and teams to make informed decisions that foster long-term value creation, societal well-being, and environmental stewardship, propelling the global community toward a more sustainable and equitable future.

The impact analysis with the P5 Standard for Sustainability in Project Management helps project managers identify both positive and negative impacts throughout a project's lifecycle across 5 dimensions. The impacts can then be prioritized based on their significance and potential consequences, allowing for focus of efforts on the most critical areas. An understanding of the impacts allows teams to develop strategies to maximize positive outcomes and minimize negative ones, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and responsible project outcomes (Green Project Management, 2025).

The Five Dimensions of the P5 Standard are as follows (Green Project Management, 2025):

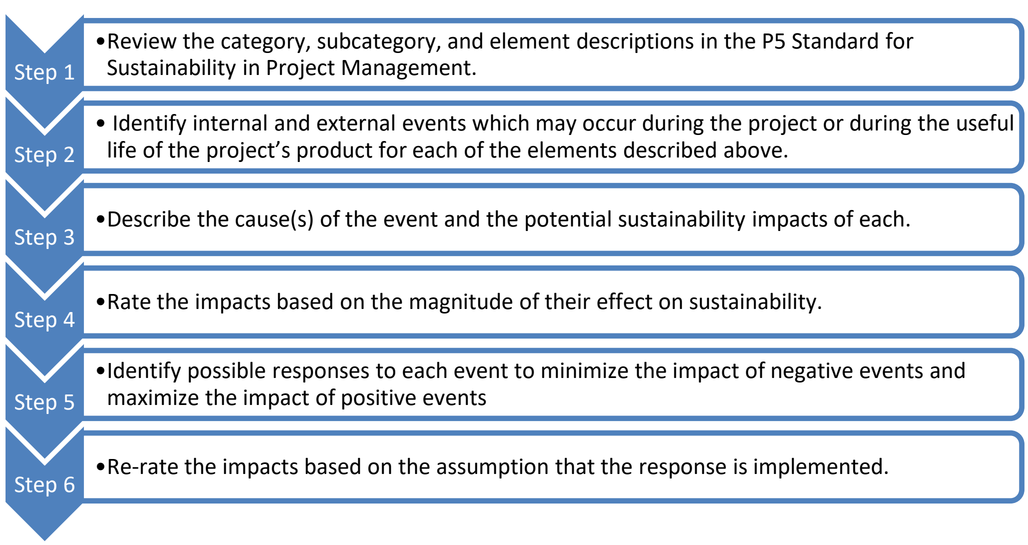
1) Product: This examines the sustainability of the product itself, considering its lifecycle (from design to disposal) and potential impacts on the environment and society.
2) Process: This evaluates the sustainability of the project's processes, focusing on efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness in resource utilization and operations.
3) People: Here the project's impact on people is assessed, including stakeholders, communities, and individuals, considering factors like health, safety, and well-being.
4) Planet: This dimension evaluates the project's environmental impact, encompassing resource consumption, pollution, and biodiversity.

5) Prosperity: Here the project's contribution to economic development and financial sustainability is examined, considering factors like job creation, economic growth, and financial viability.

Conducting the Impact Analysis

The assessment should be undertaken as early in the project as possible and should be updated regularly throughout the project to ensure that the information is current, correct, and useful. The analysis requires an understanding of the business case, the project requirements, and the organization's sustainability goals. Lessons learned from previous projects may also inform the analysis. Figure 17 below shows the key steps in the P5 assessment.

Figure 17 Summary of Steps for P5 Standard Assessment (Source: Green Project Management, 2025)



Note. Adapted from "The P5 Standard for Sustainability in Project Management,"by Green Project Management, 2025

The Benefits of P5 Impact Analysis include:

- Enhanced sustainability of projects
- Improved decision-making throughout the project lifecycle.
- Reduced Risk by early identification of potential negative impacts and mitigation of risks associated with sustainability issues.
- Increased value by optimising sustainability leading to long-term benefits for the organization, stakeholders, and the environment

In undertaking a P5 analysis in the context of this project several elements of the assessment can be considered. The proposed areas that can be assessed include:

Local Procurement

Digital Communication

Travelling and Commuting

Logistics

Energy Consumption

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Renewables and Clean Energy Return

Biodiversity

Water Consumption

7.4 Relationship of the Project to the Dimensions of Regenerative Development

Regenerative development builds on the foundation of sustainable development and, through a more inclusive, comprehensive approach, seeks to activate the healing, regenerative process of the earth. Regenerative Development is a holistic development approach that encourages communities to support and create positive relationships that will benefit society and our environments by allowing the system to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances (University of Melborne, 2019). This emerging approach is built on an ecological mindset that learns from nature and understands that diverse strategies acting in unison are key elements to create an adaptable and resilient environment (and development). This development approach which embraces uncertainty and change posits that every issue has many interacting factors contributing to it and so attempts to improve the situation must act across different scales and elements.

The approach of regenerative development integrates six process or layers Environmental, Social, Economic, Political, Cultural and Spiritual. The environmental layer addresses the regeneration of functional landscapes to produce and conserve, maximizing ecosystem function. The social layer addresses social strengthening by community organization and development, to cope with adaptation to climate change and reduce sumptuous consumption patterns. With respect to economic processes, regenerative development seeks a new paradigm for economic development where people matter more than markets and money, measured according to the well-being of humans and all life forms. From a cultural perspective, regenerative development promotes the conservation and valuation of living culture which is the necessary bond for community life, where local knowledge, values and traditions are shared within family, friends and the community, giving meaning to these terms (Müller, 2017). The addition of the political dimension advocates for rethinking and redesigning current political structures so they reflect true participatory democracy without the influence of money and power. It also seeks to foster long term vision and actions that seek increased livelihoods and happiness and not only gross income. Lastly, regenerative development recognises a spiritual layer that fosters deep spiritual and value structures based on ethics, transparency and global well-being to allow humanity to live in peace with itself and Mother Earth (Müller, 2017).

The incorporation of regenerative development principles presents several benefits to organisations working on development projects as it enhances regenerative capacity in living systems that manifests increasingly higher levels of health and potential. Given that regenerative development focuses on positive outcomes for all members of a system this can translate to increased opportunities for health, well-being, and happiness. Regenerative development promotes explicit and deep engagement of stakeholders, inhabitants of a place, and practitioners in a collaborative, co-creative process. This has the potential to help shift values, beliefs and behaviors to nurture thriving living systems. Furthermore, regenerative development creates mutually beneficial, co-evolving relationships (Gibbons, Cloutier, Coseo, & Barakat, 2018). Regenerative development also works with whole living systems, not just isolated fragments, to understand geological, ecological, and sociocultural relationships and flows to increase viability, vitality, and evolutionary capacity.

Regenerative development uses a variety of specific methods, techniques, and technologies that are locally adapted to achieve its overarching goals of creating regenerative capacity and manifesting ever-increasing potential (Gibbons, Cloutier, Coseo, & Barakat, 2018). It recognises the need for a multi-disciplinary and inclusive approach to solving our problems today. The research project supports a PMO that will facilitate the incorporation of regenerative development considerations in the scope and reporting of projects undertaken by the Commission. The vision of the OECS is to create a better quality of life for the people of the OECS region with a mission of driving and supporting sustainable development through collective integrative action and development cooperation. A PMO at the OECS Commission that promotes sustainable development and regenerative development will help the OECS achieve its vision and mission.

The outputs of this research project, particularly the PMO Enhancement Plan, can facilitate the integration of regenerative development aspects into the operations of the OECS PMO from initiation of projects through to project closure. This can be achieved by introducing regenerative development considerations into project concepts, project charter development, project business case and other project documents and orgnisational process assets. This research project seeks to develop a communication and stakeholder management plan for the PMO and regenerative development can readily be included in these plans. Future projects developed using the regenerative development approach will have a strong emphasis on the inclusive, active participation of local communities. This will result in social regeneration, the advancement of a community or group of communities towards a more cohesive state where there is bonding and collaboration between people that have affinity but also and very importantly, the inclusion of people with diverse positions.

Through an enhanced PMO which recognises the benefits of regenerative development and has an effective stakeholder management plan, the OECS projects will help bring together diverse stakeholders to add value to the projects of the Commission. Youth inclusion and opportunities for co-creation are key opportunities which could be enhanced in the OECS projects as a result. This will ultimately help emphasize the contributions of local, traditional and indigenous knowledge for enhanced project delivery as part of stakeholder engagement.

The political involvement in projects undertaken by the Commission could also be improved because of the recommendations to include regenerative development proposed by this research project. This could have significant positive benefits as politicians as a major stakeholder for an inter-governmental agency like, the OECS Commission and this is an important partner under the regenerative development approach. By inspiring and educating politicians during project implementation, the opportunity exists to influence their decision-making leading to strengthened ethics and values, and improved transparency (Müller, 2017) . The research project could also serve to strengthen and maintain the unique cultural identity of the OECS through the projects to be undertaken in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: FGP Charter

CHARTER OF THE PROPOSED
FINAL GRADUATION PROJECT (FGP)

1. Student name

Judith Alita Ephraim-Schmidt

2. FGP name

Developing an Effective Project Management Office (PMO) for the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission.

3. Application Area (Sector or activity)

Intergovermental /development agency

4. Student signature

5. Name of the Graduation Seminar facilitator

Carlos Brenes Mena

6. Signature of the facilitator

7. Date of charter approval

August 2025

8. Project start and finish date

September 2025	January 2026

9. Research question

What requirements and measures are needed to enhance the functioning of the Project Management Office of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission to support the delivery of sustainable projects?

10. Research hypothesis

Redefinition of the role and functions of the Project Management Office at the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission will support the organisation to better plan, execute, monitor and close sustainable projects for the Eastern Caribbean region.

11. General objective

To develop a proposal to redefine the Project Management Office at the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission to bring added value for the delivery of sustainable projects.

12. Specific objectives

5. To assess the maturity of the organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission and the evolving global project environment to confirm the required type of PMO, its functions, placement and staffing.

6. To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs.

7. To develop an implementation plan and appropriate KPIs for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development.

8. To develop a stakeholder and communication management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.

13. FGP purpose or justification

The purpose of this project to analyze the current organisational structure and project management maturity of Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission as it seeks to develop and implement impactful projects that support its Member States in the priority areas identified for action and collaboration. The OECS Commission undertakes projects on a regional basis working with several international development partners and agencies across various fields. These projects in general support at a minimum 3 OECS Member States and often have national components implemented by beneficiary countries. It is there important to have a designated office to provide some oversight, advice and guidance in the management of projects.

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission currently has a small Project Management Office and as the organization continue to increase the number of projects that it delivers particularly those within the Environmental Sustainable Division it is beneficial to assess how the current PMO can be redefined to enable the Commission to better meet its mandate and fufill the emerging needs of the OECS Member States. The OECS Commission is also seeking accreditation to both the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund and if successful, this will result in even more projects being delivered through the Commission. An enhanced PMO will greatly support the organization in increased quality of project development as well as execution.

The partners of the OECS Commission present a range of requirements and processes and a key benefit of the enhanced PMO is the creation of a repository of best practices and institutional assets that will assist in the project management of the 6 programmes areas of the Environmental Sustainability Division of the Commission which has projects valued at close to 20 million US dollars in 2024.

14. Work Breakdown Structure (

1. FGP
   1.1 FGP profile
   1.1.1 Charter

1.1.2 WBS 1.1.3 Introduction 1.1.4 Theoretical framework 1.1.5 Methodological framework 1.1.6 Annexes (FGP schedule, FGP WBS, FGP Charter) 1.2 FGP development 1.2.1 Report of Maturity Assessment of Eastern Caribbean Commission 1.2.2 Review of existing and planned projects undertaken by the organization 1.2.3 Needs assessment 1.2.4 PMO Benchmarking 1.2.5 Global best practices in PM 1.2.6 PMO Scenario analysis 1.2.7 Recommended PMO type, functions and location 1.2.8 PMO Communication Plan 1.2.9 PMO Stakeholder Management Plan 1.2.10 Conclusions 1.2.11 Recommendations 1.2.12 Reference Lists 1.2.13 Annexes 1.2.14 Tutor approval for reading 1.3 Reader's review. 1.4 Board of Examiners evaluation.

15. FGP budget

• Printing of material and finalized documents-US$200 • Software licenses -US$150 • Literature and documents for research -US$150 Total Budget US$500

16. FGP planning and development assumptions

• The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission will give approval to undertake the proposed research.

- The supervisors assigned by the university to provide support for the research project are available during the entire course of the assignment and there are not significant changes or delays to negatively impact the research project.
- There is sufficient data and information on the key areas of research both in and outside of the organization to support the conduct of the research project.
- There will be timely review and provision of feedback of FGP deliverables so that there are no delays to impact project schedule.

17. FGP constraints

- The maximum time allocated for the completion of the research project is 12 weeks.
- There are few other PMOs in regional organisations similar to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission to compare for benchmarking and best practices.
- Project beneficiaries from the countries served by the Commission will not be interviewed as part of the research.
- The research is being undertaken by one person who has a full-time job.

18. FGP development risks

- Departure or change of the existing personnel in the PMO could affect the institutional memory of the organization with respect to the operations and affect the access to critical information needed to support the research project.
- Important stakeholders in the organization may not be available or willing to participate in surveys/interviews or provide critical information or data that could delay the deliverables development and impact the quality of the completed research document.

- Heavy travel duty may impede the availability of the researcher and key personnel in the organization to meet adequately to conduct interviews and group discussions impacting the timely acquisition of data/information negatively impacting the completion of the project.

- Survey instruments necessary for collecting information /data for the research are not returned in a timely manner affecting the completion schedule and quality of the results of the research project.

- A heavy hurricane season disrupts operations at the organization making it difficult to undertake the research due to competing priorities impacting the quality and schedule of the research.

19. FGP main milestones

Deliverable	Finish estimated date
1.1 FGP profile	18th August 2025
1.1.1. Preliminary Bibliography	07th July 2025
1.1.2. Introduction	11th August 2025
1.1.3 Theoretical Framework	28th July 2025
1.1.4 Methodological Framework	04th August 2025
1.1.5 Project Validation in regenerative and sustainable development	11th August 2025
1.1.6 Complete Annexes	11th August 2025
1.1.7. Finalise Charter	18th August 2025
1.2 FGP development	31st January 2026
1.2.1 Needs Assessment	5th September 2025
1.2.2 Maturity Assessment	15th September 2025
1.2.3 Review and assessment of Current PMO	30th September 2025
1.2.4 PMO Benchmarking	15th October 2025
1.2.5Communication Plan	30th October 2025
1.2.6 Stakeholder Management Plan	15th November 2025
1.3 Readers review	30th January 2026
1.4 Board of Examiners Evaluation	06th February 2026

20. Theoretical framework

20.1 Estate of the “matter”

An intergovernmental organization is refers to an entity created by treaty, involving two or more nations, to work in good faith, on issues of common interest. There is ongoing work on IGOs with a focus on their membership and their purpose. IGOs have the financial and political support of its members.

Work is continuing on different types of PMOS.

20.2 Basic conceptual framework

Project Management Office
Environmental Sustainability
Intergovernmental organization
Regional integration
Regional Projects

21. Methodological framework

Objective	Name of deliverable	Information sources	Research method	Tools	Restrictions
1.To assess the maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission and the evolving global project environment to confirm the required type of PMO, its functions, placement and staffing.	A report that summarises the results of the assessment of the level of maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission.	Primary Sources Interviews with project staff at the Commission, Review of projects documentation, review of organisational decisions and priorities	Qualitative Analysis Quantitative Analysis Case study Analysis Observational Method	Semi Structured Interviews Questionnaires via google Document analysis Project Management Maturity Model .	Availability and completeness of past project data may be limited Data is scattered in various locations.

		Secondary Sources Books, articles and online literature on organisational maturity			
2.To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PMO in meeting the current and anticipated organisational needs.	A report of the assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the OECS Commission highlighting key successes and áreas of shortcoming.	Primary Sources Surveys and Interviews with projects managers. Divisional heads, programme director, project staff, PMO documents Secondary Sources Website research on PMOs, Project management papers and templates. Best practices, case studies on PMO	Qualitative Analysis Quantitative Analysis Observational Method	Questionnaires Semi-structured interviews Document analysis	There is limited documentation of the PMO operations. Persons have varying expectations of the role of a PMO.
3.To develop an implementation plan and appropriate KPIs for strengthening of the PMO in support of enhanced delivery of Environmental Sustainability projects incorporating regenerative development.	An implementation plan (roadmap) outlining key milestones and SMART actions that enhance the OECS PMO's capacity to support the Commission undertaking environmental sustainability projects. An associated monitoring framework with appropriate KPIs for	Primary Sources Interview with Project managers, Project Management Office, Beneficiary country Project focal points Secondary Sources Website research on PMOs, Project management papers and templates.	Qualitative Analysis Quantitative Analysis Case study Analysis Observational Method	Expert judgment Semi structured interviews Focus groups with key PMO stakeholders Brainstorming Benchmarking with similar PMO	The small sample size for persons interviewed limits ideas and presents a homogenous or similar thinking. There is limited opportunity to test aspects of the implementation plan.

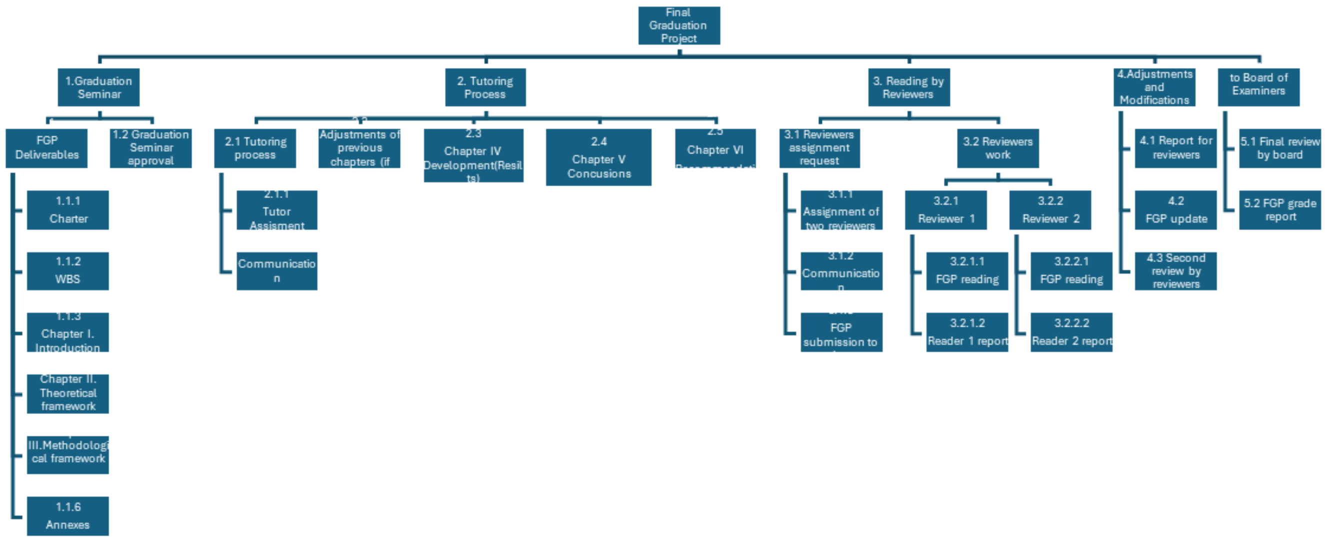
	measuring success.	Best practices, case studies on PMO			
4.To develop a stakeholder and communication management plan in support of an enhanced PMO.	A communication management plan for the OECS PMO. A stakeholder management plan for the OECS PMO including stakeholder registry and stakeholder engagement plan.	Primary Sources Interview with PMO staff, Project Teams, Beneficiary country Project focal points Secondary sources Website research on PMOs, Communication plans and stakeholder management plans. Best practices, case studies on PMO	Qualitative Analysis Quantitative Analysis Case study Analysis Observational Method	Expert Judgment Data gathering - questionnaires and surveys Stakeholder analysis Stakeholder maps Power /influence grid Stakeholder engagement assessment matrix Meetings Communication requirements analysis	All stakeholders will not have the same level of accessibility. In person engagement of stakeholders is limited

22. Validation of the work in the field of regenerative and sustainable development.

The research project will show how the PMO can introduce and incorporate regenerative development into the projects of the Commission building on the ongoing work in sustainable development. Through the work of an enhanced PMO including a stakeholder and communication management plan for the PMO, the following can be achieved in the projects:

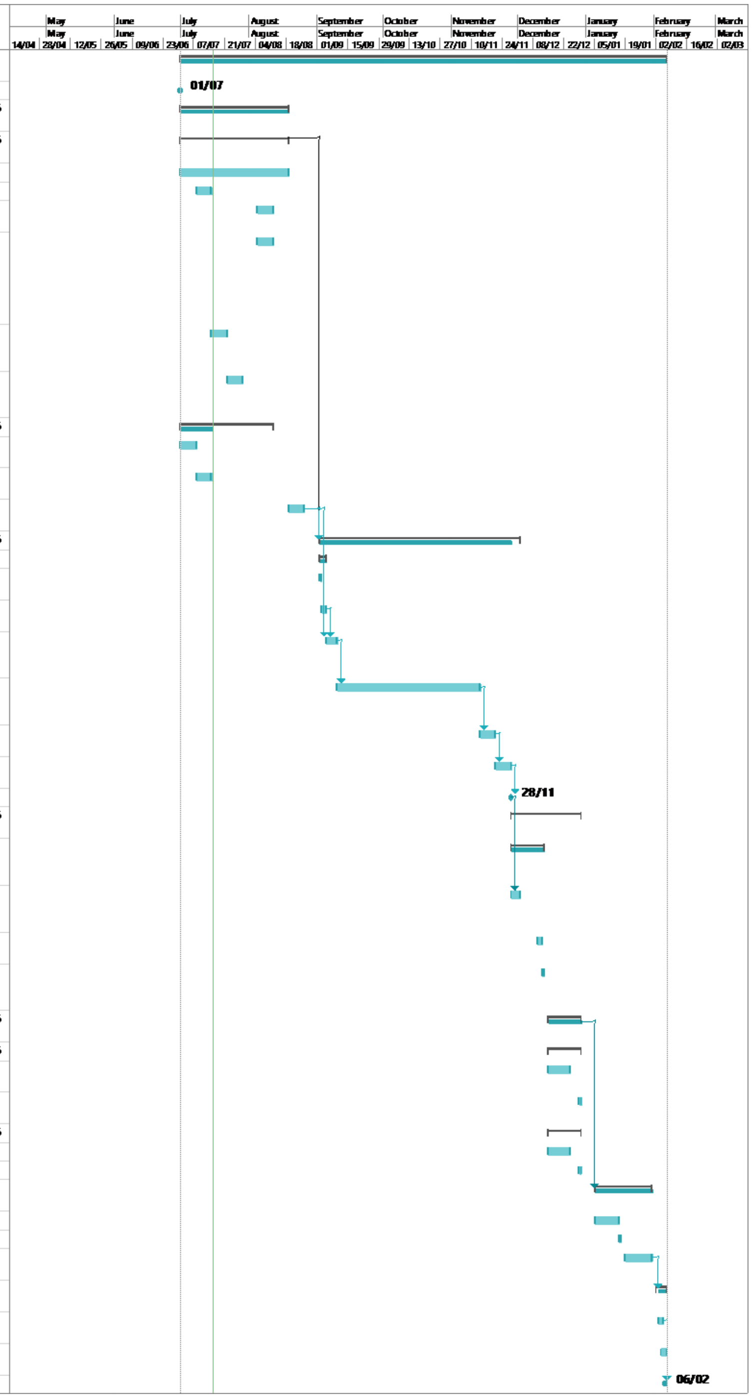
- Improved stakeholder participation to be inclusive of youth, diverse groups and politicians.
- incorporation of methods, techniques and activities that promote viability, vitality, and evolutionary capacity
- Project scope to include the use of traditional and local knowledge
- Incorporation of activities that preserve and maintain the cultural heritage of the OECS.

APPENDIX 2: FGP WBS



APPENDIX 3: FGP SCHEDULE

ID	Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish
1		Final Graduation Project	159 days?	Tue 01/07/25	Fri 06/02/26
2		FGP Start	0 days	Tue 01/07/25	Tue 01/07/25
3		1. Graduation seminar	35 days?	Tue 01/07/25	Mon 18/08/25
4		1.1. FGP Deliverables	35 days	Tue 01/07/25	Mon 18/08/25
5		1.1.1. Charter	35 days	Tue 01/07/25	Mon 18/08/25
6		1.1.2. WBS	5 days	Tue 08/07/25	Mon 14/07/25
7		1.1.3. Chapter I	5 days	Tue 05/08/25	Mon 11/08/25
8		1.1.4. Chapter VII Project Validation in sustainable and	5 days	Tue 05/08/25	Mon 11/08/25
9		1.1.5. Chapter II Theoretical	5 days	Tue 15/07/25	Mon 21/07/25
10		1.1.6. Chapter III Methodologic	5 days	Tue 22/07/25	Mon 28/07/25
11		1.1.7. Annex	30 days	Tue 01/07/2	Mon 11/08/25
12		1.1.7.1. Bibliograph	5 days	Tue 01/07/25	Mon 07/07/25
13		1.1.7.2. Schedule	5 days	Tue 08/07/25	Mon 14/07/25
14		1.2. Graduation Seminar Approval	5 days	Tue 19/08/25	Mon 25/08/25
15		2. Tutoring Proces	65 days	Tue 02/09/2	Mon 01/12/25
16		2.1.Tutor	3 days	Tue 02/09/2	Thu 04/09/25
17		2.1.1. Tutor assignment	1 day	Tue 02/09/25	Tue 02/09/25
18		2.1.2. Communicati	2 days	Wed 03/09/25	Thu 04/09/25
19		2.2. Adjustment of previous chapters (if	3 days	Fri 05/09/25	Tue 09/09/25
20		2.3. Chapter IV Development (Results)	47 days	Wed 10/09/25	Thu 13/11/25
21		2.4. Chapter V Conclusions	5 days	Fri 14/11/25	Thu 20/11/25
22		2.5. Chapter VI Recommendatio	5 days	Fri 21/11/25	Thu 27/11/25
23		Tutor Approval	0 days	Fri 28/11/25	Fri 28/11/25
24		3. Reading by Reviewers	22 days	Fri 28/11/25	Mon 29/12/25
25		3.1. Reviewers Assignment Request	11 days	Fri 28/11/25	Fri 12/12/25
26		3.1.1. Assignment of two	2 days	Fri 28/11/25	Mon 01/12/25
27		3.1.2. Communicati	2 days	Wed 10/12/25	Thu 11/12/25
28		3.1.3.FGP submission to reviewers	1 day	Fri 12/12/25	Fri 12/12/25
29		3.2. Reviewers work	11 days	Mon 15/12/25	Mon 29/12/25
30		3.2.1. Review	11 days	Mon 15/12/2	Mon 29/12/25
31		3.2.1.1. FGP	8 days	Mon 15/12/25	Wed 24/12/25
32		3.2.1.2 Reader 1	1 day	Mon 29/12/25	Mon 29/12/25
33		3.2.2. Reviewer	11 days	Mon 15/12/2	Mon 29/12/25
34		3.2.2.1. FGP r	8 days	Mon 15/12/2	Wed 24/12/25
35		3.2.2.2.Revie	1 day	Mon 29/12/2	Mon 29/12/25
36		4.Adjustments and Modifications	20 days	Mon 05/01/26	Fri 30/01/26
37		4.1. Report for r	9 days	Mon 05/01/2	Thu 15/01/26
38		4.2. FGP update	1 day	Fri 16/01/26	Fri 16/01/26
39		4.3. Second review by	10 days	Mon 19/01/26	Fri 30/01/26
40		5.Presentation to Board of	5 days?	Mon 02/02/26	Fri 06/02/26
41		5.1. Final review by board	2 days	Tue 03/02/26	Wed 04/02/26
42		5.2. FGP grade report	3 days	Wed 04/02/26	Fri 06/02/26
43		FGP End	0 days	Fri 06/02/26	Fri 06/02/26



Appendix 4

Other relevant Information

Appendix 4.1 Project Management Maturity Survey

OECS Commission PMO Maturity Assessment Questionnaire

My name is Judith Ephraim-Schmidt and I am completing a Master's degree in Project Management with the Universidad para la Cooperación Internacional. As part of my final research project, I am assessing the organisational maturity of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean OECS Commission.

You have been identified as a person who can contribute to this assessment and I would be grateful if you would spend some time answering these questions as honestly and objectively as possible.

Maturity assessments typically measure how well the organization performs in multiple dimensions. This questionnaire assesses the maturity of the OECS Commission's Project Management Office (PMO). Please rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

• Rating Scale

1 - Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly Agree

• A. Governance and Strategic Alignment

Question	1Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1. The PMO has a clearly defined mandate and governance framework.					
2. PMO objectives are aligned					

with the OECS strategic goals.					
3. Senior management supports and champions the PMO.					
4. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.					
5. Project prioritisation aligns with strategic objectives.					

- ## B. Processes, Standards, and Methodology

Question	1Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
6. Standardized methodologies and templates are in place.					
7. Departments apply consistent project management practices.					
8. There are clear project initiation, planning, and closure procedures.					
9. Lessons learned are documented and shared.					
10. Project management tools are used consistently.					

- **C. Performance Measurement and Reporting**

Question	1Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
11. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are defined and tracked.					
12. The PMO regularly reports progress and risks.					
13. Stakeholders receive timely and relevant information.					
14. Portfolio reporting informs leadership decisions.					
15. Post-project evaluations are conducted consistently.					

- **D. Stakeholder Engagement and Communication**

Question	1Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
16. The PMO has a formal communication plan.					
17. Stakeholders understand the PMO's value and role.					
18. Feedback is collected and acted upon regularly.					
19. PMO-department communication					

is consistent and transparent.					
20. Project achievements are shared organization-wide.					

- **E. Capability and Capacity Development**

Question	1Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
21. Staff receive regular project management training.					
22. The PMO provides mentorship and guidance.					
23. Continuous improvement is part of the PMO culture.					
24. The PMO has adequate staffing and resources.					
25. Lessons from projects are applied to new initiatives.					

- **F. Technology and Tools**

Question	1Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
26. Project management software is integrated organization-wide.					

27. The PMO maintains a centralized project repository.					
28. Dashboards provide real-time project visibility.					
29. Data analytics are used for decision-making.					
30. Staff receive training on new tools and systems.					

- **G. Organisational Culture and Change Readiness**

Question	1Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
31. Project management is viewed as a strategic competency.					
32. Staff embrace standardization and structured approaches.					
33. Collaboration across units is encouraged.					
34. Change management is built into project delivery.					
35. Innovation is supported in project implementation.					

- **H. Overall PMO Effectiveness**

Question	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

36. The PMO improves project delivery timeliness and quality.					
37. The PMO adds measurable organisational value.					
38. PMO reporting influences leadership decisions.					
39. The PMO effectively coordinates cross-departmental projects.					
40. The PMO is recognized and supported across the Commission.					

Appendix 4.2 -Semi-structured Interviews

Please answer the following open-ended questions with as much detail as possible.

1. How would you best describe the PMO at the OECS Commission and why?

   A) Supportive PMO- provides guidance, templates, best practices, and tools for managing projects. Acts more like a consultant or advisor, offering resources and advice but with little authority over the projects.

   B) Controlling PMO- ensures that project management standards, processes, and tools are followed and may monitor project performance and require regular updates. This

PMO has a moderate level of control and ensures compliance with established methodologies and project management standards.

C) Directive PMO-has the highest level of control. This PMO not only sets the standards but also directly manages projects. The PMO may assign project managers and be responsible for project execution, ensuring that projects are aligned with organisational strategy. Project managers report to the PMO, and the office has significant authority over the project's direction

2. What do you see as the most important roles for a PMO at the OECS Commission?

3. In your opinion what type of PMO from question 41 is best suited for the Commission and why?

4. Is the placement of the PMO in the current organization structure ideal? If yes , why? If not why?

5. Do you think that the current PMO at the OECS Commission is suited to respond to the emerging needs of the OECS Commission and why?

Appendix 6

Philological Dictum

Bernice Lewis
Director
JOIE Innovative Learning Solutions Inc.
John Compton Hwy
Castries
Saint Lucia

4th January 2026

Dr. Ronny Gonzalez
Tutor
Universidad Para La Cooperacion
San Jose
Costa Rica

Philological Review -Judith Ephraim-Schmidt Final Graduation Project

This is to certify that I have read and thoroughly reviewed the results of Ms Judith Ephraim-Schmidt's final graduation project 'Developing an Effective Project Management Office (PMO) for the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission'. This project is in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master's in Project Management Programme of the Universidad Para La Cooperacion. As part of the review process, I proposed corrections with respect to grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, flow, repetition and phrasing which have been addressed in the final submission.

With the incorporation of the edits, Ms Ephraim-Schmidt's paper meets the required literary and linguistic standards for a Masters-level thesis. I am pleased to give my full support for the document to advance to the defence phase.

Sincerely,

Bernice Lewis
Director
JOIE Innovative Learning Solutions Inc.