



The Nordic PMO Reality Report 2026

Close to 800 PMO and portfolio professionals reveal what really drives — and slows down — project performance across the Nordics.

A stylized line graph with an orange area fill below the line. The line starts at a low point on the left, rises to a peak, dips slightly, and then rises to a higher peak on the right. A vertical line connects the highest peak to a callout box. The callout box is orange with a white border and contains the text "↑ 25%". There are four circular markers along the line: one at the start, one at the first peak, one at the dip, and one at the highest peak.

↑ 25%



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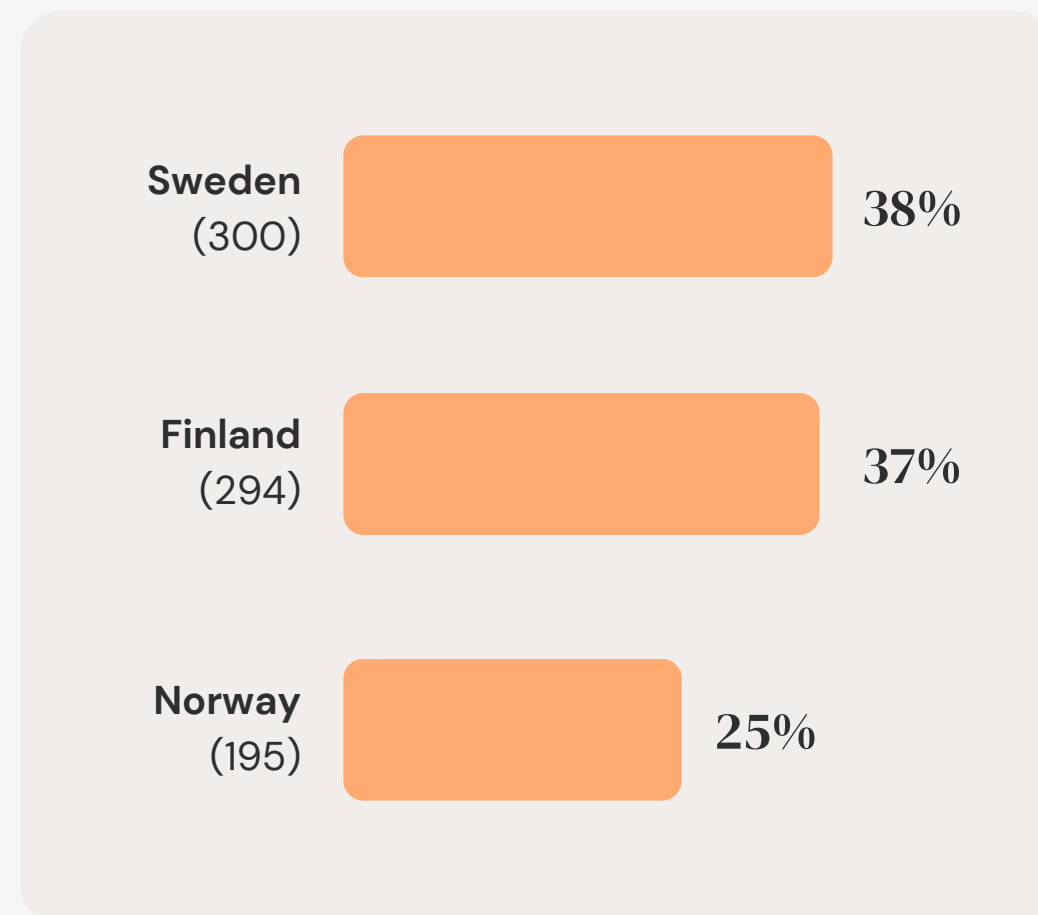
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The Report in Brief

Nordic PMO professionals are keeping organizations moving — in a daily reality of fragmented systems, static reports, and portfolios where priorities shift faster than decisions get made.

The ambition to work more strategically is real. But the structure rarely supports it.

789 interviews conducted across the Nordics:



The findings no one says out loud

83% operate in hybrid tool environments.

Dedicated systems mixed with spreadsheets, manual processes, and workarounds. Fragmentation is not an exception — it is the default infrastructure of Nordic project management.

Only 17% have a dedicated PMO system. And the difference it makes is not incremental. It is structural — visible across every question in the study.

Up to half a working week per month goes to reporting. Not to drive performance. To maintain visibility.

34% in every Nordic country said the same thing — independently, in three languages: Top management underestimates how much time and resources projects actually require. The same number. Every market. Unrehearsed.

CHAPTER 1

The Daily Reality

The tool running Nordic project management is not a PMO system. It is a spreadsheet.

83%

of respondents operate in hybrid environments — dedicated tools for some things, spreadsheets for the rest, and manual processes holding it together. Only 17% work with a fully dedicated project and portfolio management platform.



53%

combine three or more tools. The result is fragmentation, version conflicts, and a reporting burden that consumes days — not hours — every month.



The reporting time tax

Up to half a working week per month goes to status updates, follow-up, and report compilation. That is executive bandwidth spent maintaining visibility — not creating it.

And this burden does not scale down. It scales up — with complexity, with portfolio size, and most sharply with the absence of integrated systems.

What would PMO professionals do with 10 hours extra per month?

Better resource planning, deeper stakeholder engagement, scenario planning, and capability development. Not one respondent said more reporting. The message about where value is created could not be clearer.

CHAPTER 2

Three Lenses

Lens 1: Finland

Finland delivers projects. Norway and Sweden govern portfolios. Finnish PMO professionals work hard, care about quality, and describe their year as energizing more often than their Nordic peers (18% vs. 12–13%). But the structural position they occupy is consistently further from strategy and closer to execution than anywhere else in the Nordics.

The pattern holds across every question:

- ➔ **Decision authority:** 46% make or co-own decisions vs. 52% in Sweden and Norway. 35% operate in advisory support roles vs. 26% elsewhere — preparing data for others rather than acting on it.
- ➔ **Portfolio governance:** Only 3% hold enterprise-level portfolio responsibility vs. 8% in Sweden and Norway.
- ➔ **Predictability:** 10% describe their portfolio as very predictable — identical to the burnout group, and half the 22% in Sweden and Norway.

➔ **Organizational change:** 28% describe change as externally driven rather than strategically directed — 8 points above Sweden and Norway.

➔ **Leadership access:** 40% cite limited time in steering forums as a key bottleneck vs. 30% elsewhere.

➔ **Success definition:** Finland measures projects by what was delivered. Norway and Sweden measure them by what changed — 27% define success as business impact vs. 16% in Finland.

Finland is not behind. It is at a different point in the same journey — with a clear structural gap between where Finnish PMOs operate today and where portfolio value is created.

CHAPTER 2

Three Lenses

Lens 2: Dedicated PMO System

The system you have determines the seat you get.

The 17% with a dedicated PPM system are not just more efficient. They inhabit a structurally different role.

- ➔ **Decision authority:** 66% make or co-own decisions vs. 47% without a system — and those without are 50% more likely to be in pure support roles (31% vs. 21%).
- ➔ **Predictability:** 37% describe their portfolio as very predictable — more than double the 14% without a system.
- ➔ **Shared truth:** 59% feel their organization has a shared, trusted data source vs. 34% without one.

- ➔ **Strategic positioning:** When a dedicated system is in place, 39% describe PMO as strategic support for management decisions — more than double the 18% without one. Those without a system are nearly twice as likely to describe PMO as primarily governance and control (31% vs. 16%).
- ➔ **Data confidence:** 25% report very high data confidence vs. 16% without one — more than 50% more likely.
- ➔ **Strategic clarity:** 47% experience priority changes as clear and easy to understand vs. 32%. 63% see clear connection between projects and organizational strategy vs. 53%.

The pattern is consistent and significant. A dedicated system does not just improve efficiency — it repositions the entire PMO function from a reporting mechanism to a strategic driver.

CHAPTER 2

Three Lenses

Lens 3: Draining vs. Not Draining

The strongest predictor of burnout is not the workload. It is structural invisibility.

Those describing the past year as draining show a consistent pattern across the entire dataset:

- ➔ **More than twice as likely** to rely on static reports (40% vs. 28%)
- ➔ **Less than half as likely** to have real-time visibility (8% vs. 18%)
- ➔ **Three times more likely** to face unclear or conflicting priorities (15% vs. 5%)
- ➔ **14 points less likely** to experience clear strategic direction (45% vs. 59%)

➔ **12 points less likely** to trust a shared data source (30% vs. 42%)

➔ **More likely to be seen as governance** than strategy (33% vs. 26%)

The causal chain is visible in the data:

No system → No shared truth → No strategic clarity → Static reports → Exhaustion

This is not a workload story. The people who feel most drained are those operating without visibility, without authority, and without a shared version of reality. Fixing the structure reduces the drain — and the data shows it consistently.

When PMO is reduced to compliance and control, people feel it. When it drives strategy, they thrive.

CHAPTER 3

The Management Reality Gap

“If top management truly understood our project reality, they would realize that...”

This open question produced the most striking result in the study. Across all three markets — independently, in three languages — respondents gave the same answer.

34%

in every country identified the same thing: our resources and time estimates are realistic. Not pessimism. Not excuses. Reality.

The three most consistent themes from **650+** open responses:

Resources and time are insufficient — everywhere

"Workload exceeds resources."

"Current schedules are unrealistic without additional resources."

"There are limited hours in a week."

This was not a complaint. It was a correction.

Complexity is higher than leadership assumes

"Surprises are the rule, not the exception."

"In practice, things differ materially from plans on paper."

"Change happens slowly and through perseverance — not faster deadlines."

Obstacles do not reach management in real time

"Barriers don't reach leadership until it is too late."

"Good decisions don't happen in an instant."

The most common sentiment was not anger. It was a quiet desire to be understood accurately — and a structural frustration that the system does not allow project reality to reach the people who need to act on it.

The management reality gap is not a communication failure. It is a visibility failure.

CHAPTER 4

The Path Forward

The market is not asking for better dashboards. It is asking for control.

Four structural investments that would make a measurable difference:

1

Replace hybrid with integrated portfolio intelligence

The dominant model — spreadsheet plus system plus manual override — is not temporary. It is embedded. Replacing it is a deliberate decision, not a natural evolution.

2

Automate the reporting time tax

Half a working week per month is consumed by manual reporting. Automating it is not an efficiency measure — it is a strategic reallocation of the scarcest resource in any PMO: human attention.

3

Build real-time visibility — or accept lagging decisions

Only 13–17% have real-time portfolio visibility. Management dashboards configured for hindsight cannot support decisions that need to happen now.

4

Treat exhaustion as a governance signal

When people feel drained, it is most often because they are operating without visibility, without authority, and without a shared source of truth. The structure creates the drain. Fixing the structure removes it.

Conclusion

789 professionals.

Three markets.

One finding that
doesn't change.



The Nordic PMO challenge is not a people problem. The people are experienced, committed, and clear about what they need.

It is a structural problem — created by fragmented tools, manual processes, and systems that leave portfolio reality invisible to the people who need to act on it.

The organizations that invest in that structure will have PMO functions that are more predictable, more strategic, and less exhausted.

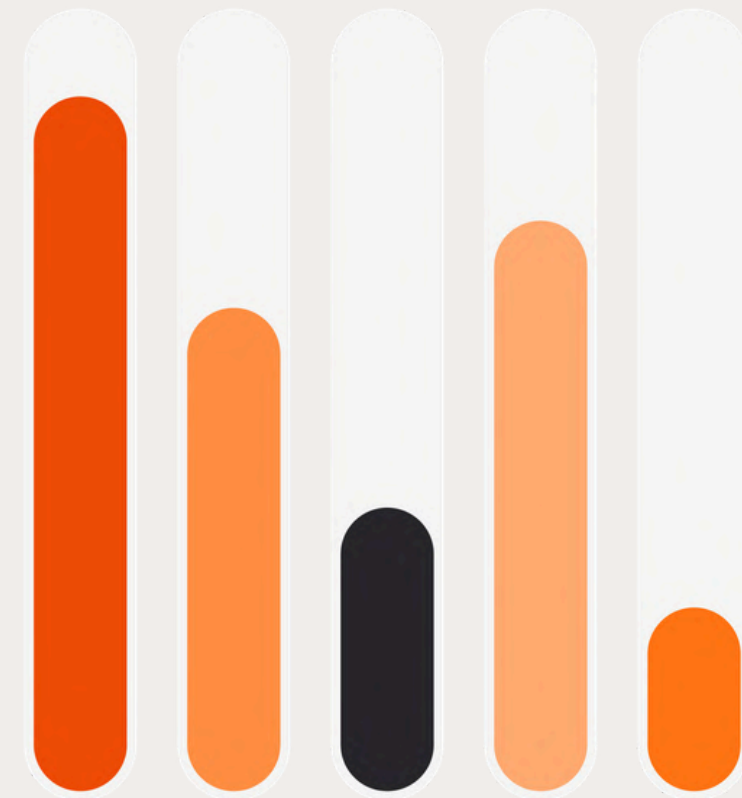
The ones that don't keep running on spreadsheets, static reports, and the goodwill of people who are running low on both.

About the Report

The Nordic PMO Study 2026 is the largest study of its kind ever conducted in the Nordics. 789 PMO professionals, portfolio managers, and project leaders from Sweden, Norway, and Finland participated anonymously — sharing the realities that rarely surface in steering committees or status meetings.

What drives performance. What kills it. And what structurally separates those who thrive from those who burn out.

- ➔ Respondents held roles such as PMO, portfolio manager, or project/program manager – or had equivalent responsibilities
- ➔ Companies with at least 100 employees
- ➔ 789 interviews conducted across the Nordics: Sweden (300), Norway (195), and Finland (294)



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