DUBAI INTERNATIONAL
PROJECT MANAGEMENT FORUM

RTA

Agility state
in the Middle East

November 2017

PMI
Project Management Institute

Table of contents

Executive summary

This report highlights the results of a survey conducted to measure the level of agility in the Middle East and its effect on the performance of projects and organizations. Moreover, the Middle East results are compared to the results of a global survey. In the Middle East 153 professionals responded to the survey compared to a total of 622 professionals who responded globally.

In many instances, the Middle East survey results are very close to those of the global survey. The level of familiarity with Agility in the Middle East (78%) was comparable to the level of familiarity in the global survey results (76%). Similarly, 94% of Middle East organizations confirmed that Agility led to better achievements of strategic objectives compared to 97% in the global survey.

In the Middle East, Highly Agile organizations showed a higher ability to introduce new business models, deploy innovation, make business critical decisions, add new products and services and adapt to changing market conditions. On the projects level, highly agile organizations confirmed that they have achieved improved control and reduced costs in their major projects as a result of adapting agile practices.

It can be concluded that higher agility leads to better performance both on the Projects and the organizations levels. For companies to realize the benefits of Agile Practices, they need to ensure top management commitment to the Agile transformation. Companies need to develop and deploy their own Agile Project Management practices and train their project management professionals on these practices.

Introduction

In the Middle East, a total of 153 professionals responded to the questionnaire with the following demographics:

Represented companies:

- The respondents represent 20 industries, with the highest representation from Information Technology (23%), Manufacturing (10%), Construction (7%), Food and Beverage (7%), Energy (6%), and Engineering (6%). [There is a chart]

- 59% of represented organizations have Annual revenue/turnover exceeding $1 Billion, 30% have annual revenue from 500 to 999 million $, and 11% from 100 to 499 million$.

- 52% of the Middle East participants are located in United Arab Emirates, 28% in Saudi Arabia, and 11% in Egypt, 4% in Kuwait, and 2% in Jordan.

Individuals participating in the survey:

- Respondents have sole or partial responsibility to deliver business results. 73% of the Participants are solely responsible for a service offering, product, product line or program, while 23% have joint responsibility with other managers.

- 30% of participants have been working with their current organization for 10 years or more, 42% for 5-10 years, and 27% from 3 to 5 years. Which indicates high level of familiarity with their organizations.

- 93% of participant's commission or initiate major projects of USD $250,000 or more.

- 24% of participants are from IT/ technology department, 11% from administration, 8% from product management, 7% from accounting/Finance, 6% are from Engineering, 6% from legal, and 6% from Digital business/ eBusiness / eCommerce.

About the ME survey

153
Participants from ME

Compared to 622 in the Global Survey from around the globe

Industries of participants

23%	Information Technology
10%	Manufacturing
7%	Construction
7%	Food and Beverage
6%	Energy
6%	Engineering

Agility level

Low / No Agility
26%

High Agility
22%

Limited Agility
52%
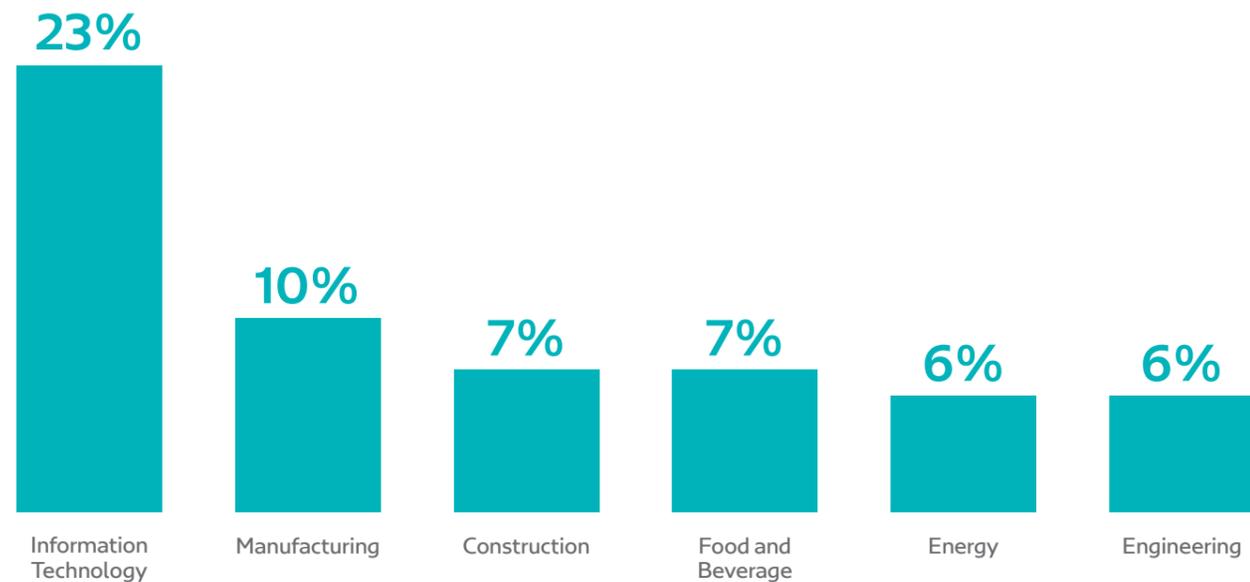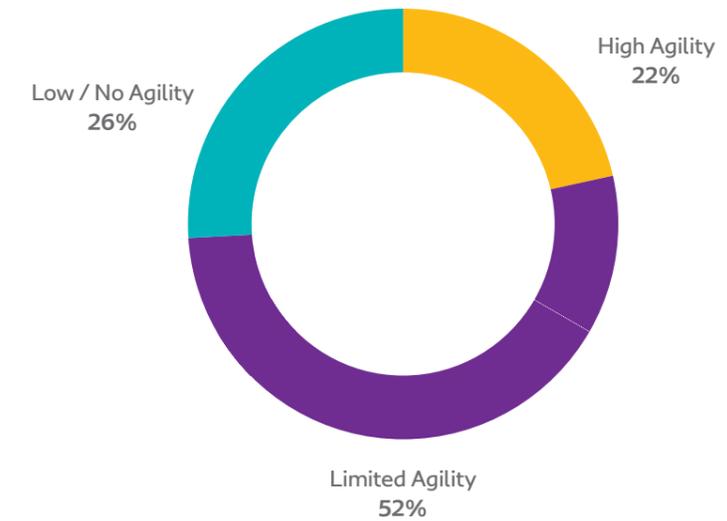
Familiarity with agile practices

Much worse than other organisations
2%

Somewhat worse than other organisations
3%

About the same as other organisations
8%

Much better than other organisations
28%

Somewhat better than other organisations
58%
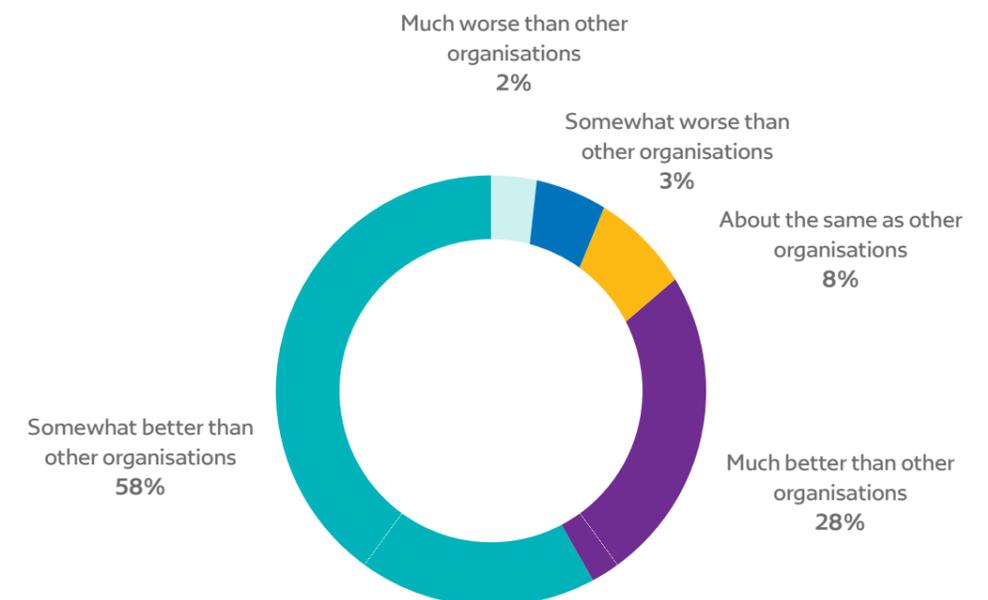
Communication about agile

57% of the ME Participants Confirmed that Agility is a top priority that the C-suite is working hard to operationalize throughout. This is slightly less that the global survey results (63%). This indicates that top management in general believe in agility and are supporting more agile transformation.

33% of the ME participants confirmed that Agility is communicated as being very important, but no real actions are taken to operationalize it.

49% of the ME participants confirmed that Agility is important to their own business unit or functional area's ability to succeed.

78% of ME participants confirmed that they are familiar or very familiar with the concept or organisational Agility , compared to 76% in the global survey results.

Familiarity with organisational agility

Not at all familiar
5%

Not very familiar
7%

Somewhat familiar
10%

Very familiar
44%

Familiar
34%
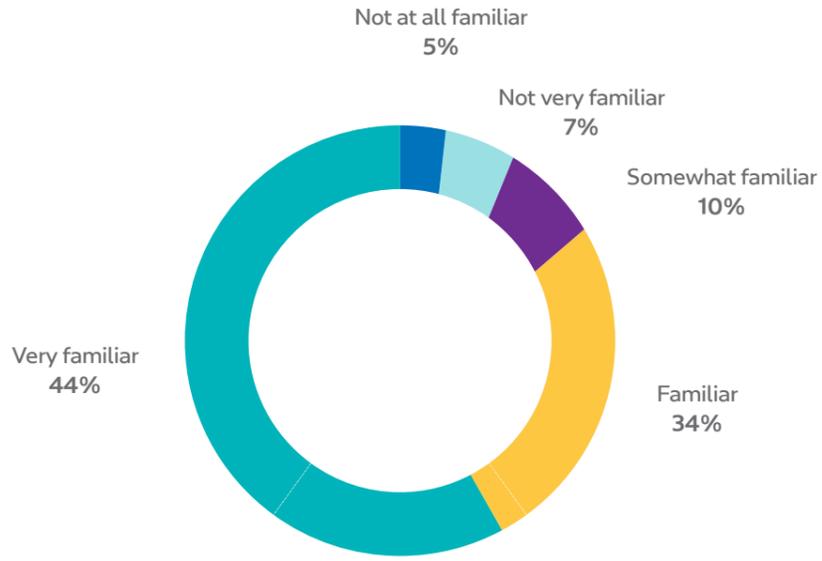
Major project alignment to organisation's strategic objectives

Only 27% of ME participants confirmed that most of their major projects are aligned to organisation's strategic objectives, 32% confirmed that many projects are aligned, and 8% confirmed that some projects only are aligned.

27%

Most of Projects are aligned

32%

Many Projects are aligned

8%

Some Projects are aligned

42%

Agility helps in achieving strategic objectives. In ME organisation with high agility, **42%** of participants confirmed that most of major projects are aligned to organisation's strategic objectives.

This % goes up to **59%** in the global survey.

Strategy implementation & benefits realisation

83% of those surveyed organisation in the Middle East perceive themselves better or somewhat better that other organisation in strategy implementation.

Somewhat worse than other organisations
4%

About the same as other organisations
13%

Much better than other organisations
36%

Somewhat better than other organisations
47%

82%
ME

68%
Global
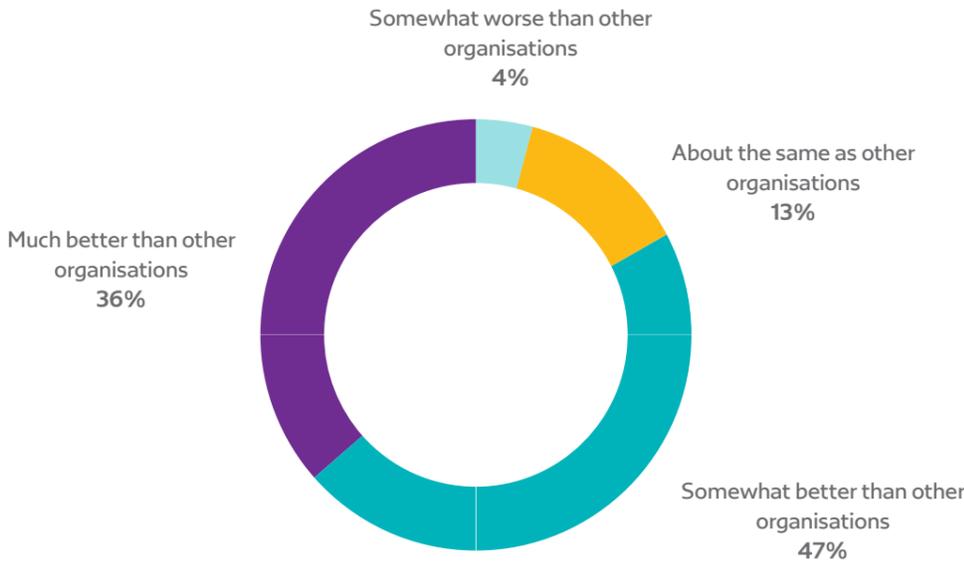
In the Middle East **82%** of the participants confirmed that they see themselves better that other organisations in benefits realisation from projects and programs compared to **68%** in the global results.

Impact of agile practices

94%
ME

97%
ME High Agile

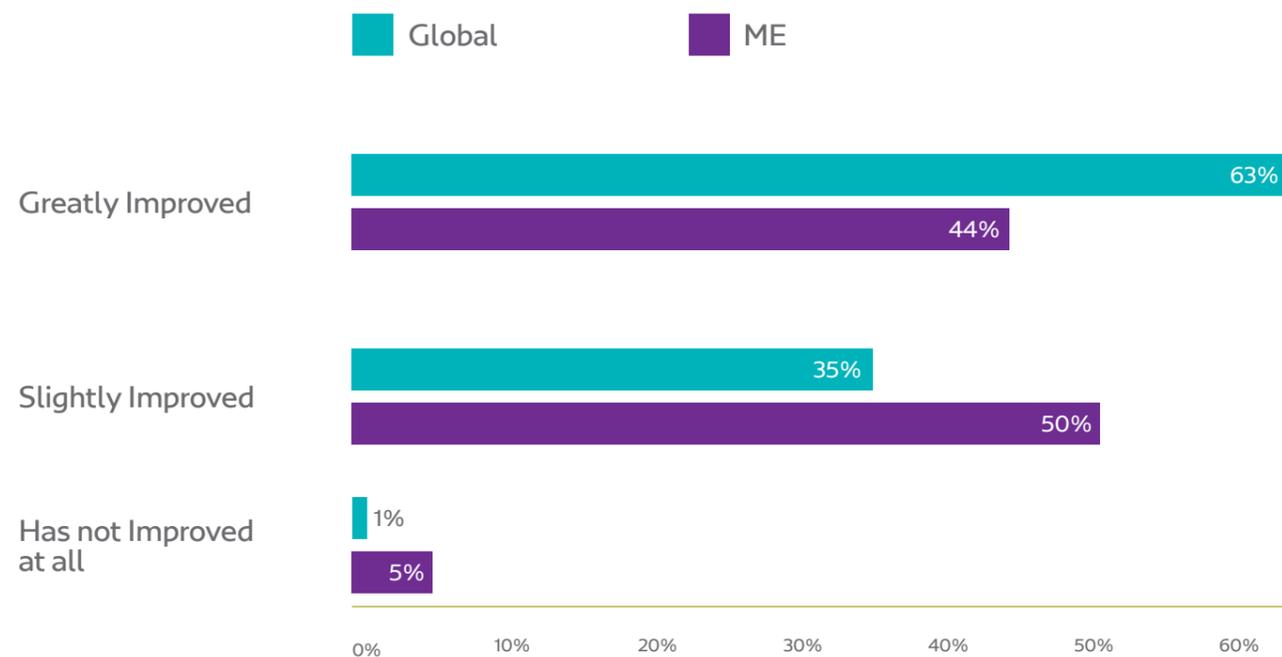In the Middle East 94% of the participants confirmed that their ability to implement against/contribute to the achievement of their organisation's strategic objectives has improved as a result of being more agile/ working in a more agile manner compared to 97% for Middle east organisations with high agility.

Improvement of ability to contribute to achievement of strategic objectives

■ Global   ■ ME

Greatly Improved
- Global: 63%
- ME: 44%

Slightly Improved
- Global: 35%
- ME: 50%

Has not Improved at all
- Global: 1%
- ME: 5%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%

44%
ME

63%
Global

The ability to implement against / contribute to the achievement of organisation's strategic objectives has greatly improved as a result of being more agile / working in a more agile manner as confirmed by **44%** of the ME participants and **63%** of the global participants.

55%
ME High Agile

88%
Global High Agile

For organisations with high agility , the ability to implement against/contribute to the achievement of organisation's strategic objectives has greatly improved as a result of being more agile/working in a more agile manner as confirmed by **55%** of the ME participants and **88%** of the global participants.

Adoption of agile practices

31%
ME

29%
Global

31% of ME participants have successfully adopted many agile practices and approaches compared to **29%** in the global survey. The majority of ME participants have adopted some practices and approaches to make us more agile but have more to do.

We have successfully adopted many agile practices and approaches.
31%

We have adopted some practices and approaches to make us more agile but have more to do.
44%

We have not yet adopted approaches or practices to make us more agile, but I expect to be able to do so in the near future
11%

We have not adopted approaches or practices to make us more agile, and do not believe that we will be able to do so
14%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

Skills required to implement, promote or operationalise agility

31%
ME

23%
Global

Positive attitude towards change **31%** came as the second ranked required Skills to implement, promote or operationalize agility in ME. While it was was the first choice in the Global Survey **23%**.

■ Global ■ ME

Complex problem solving skills
20%
32%

Positive attitude towards change
23%
31%

Improvisation
8%
16%

Communication skills
13%
10%

Rapid learning
12%
6%

Collaboration skills
14%
3%

Technical skills
10%
1%

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35%
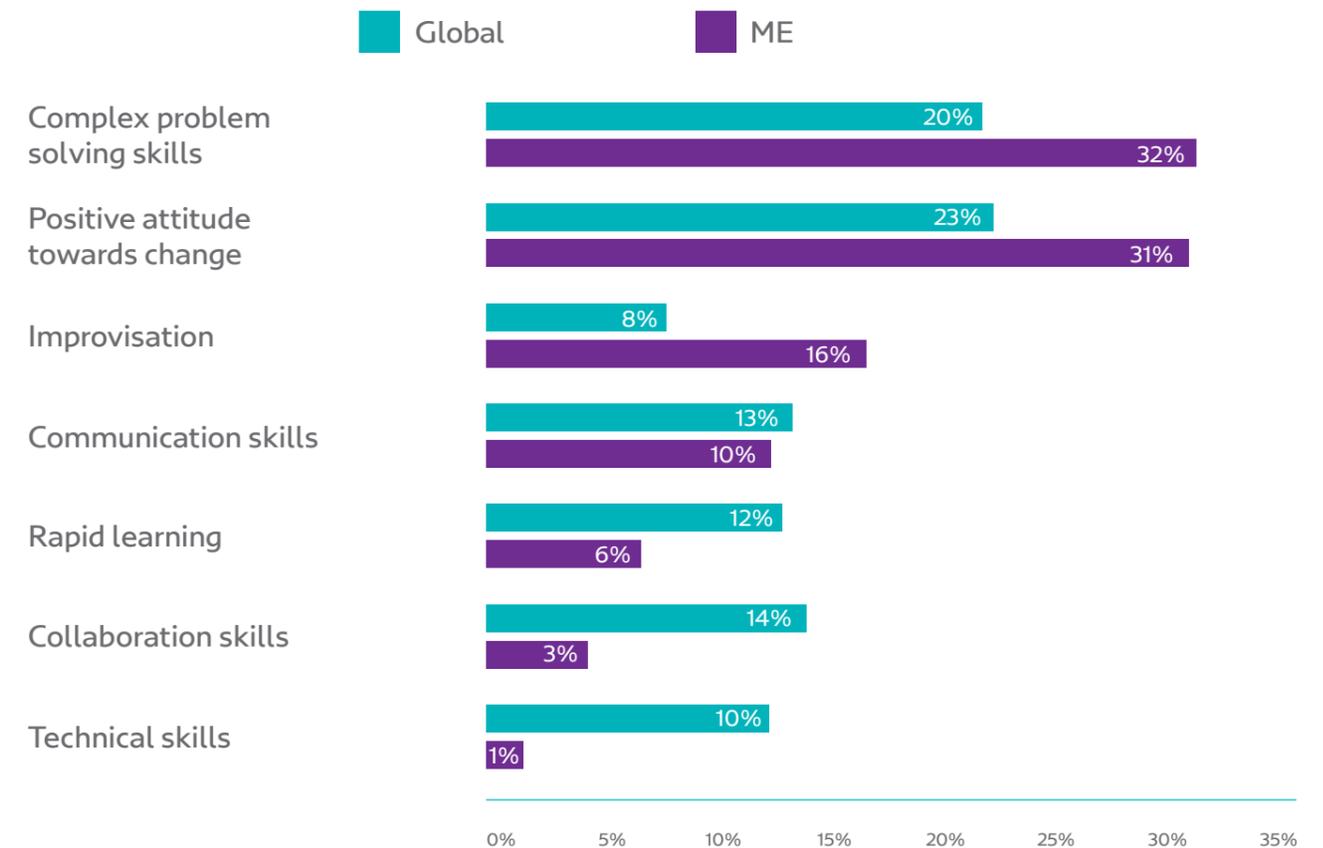
Business support

45%
High agility in ME

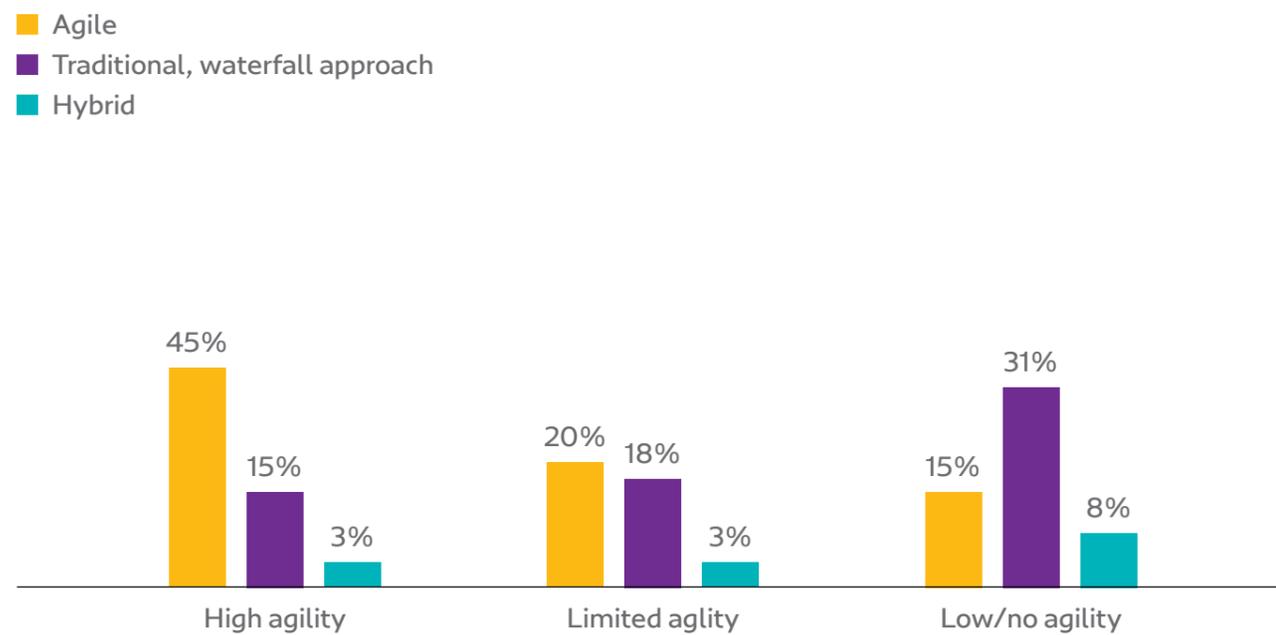45% of organisations with high agility used agile approach in the majority of their projects, compared to **20%**, and **15%** for limited, and low agility organisations respectively.
It is noticed the low reported percentage of hybrid approach.
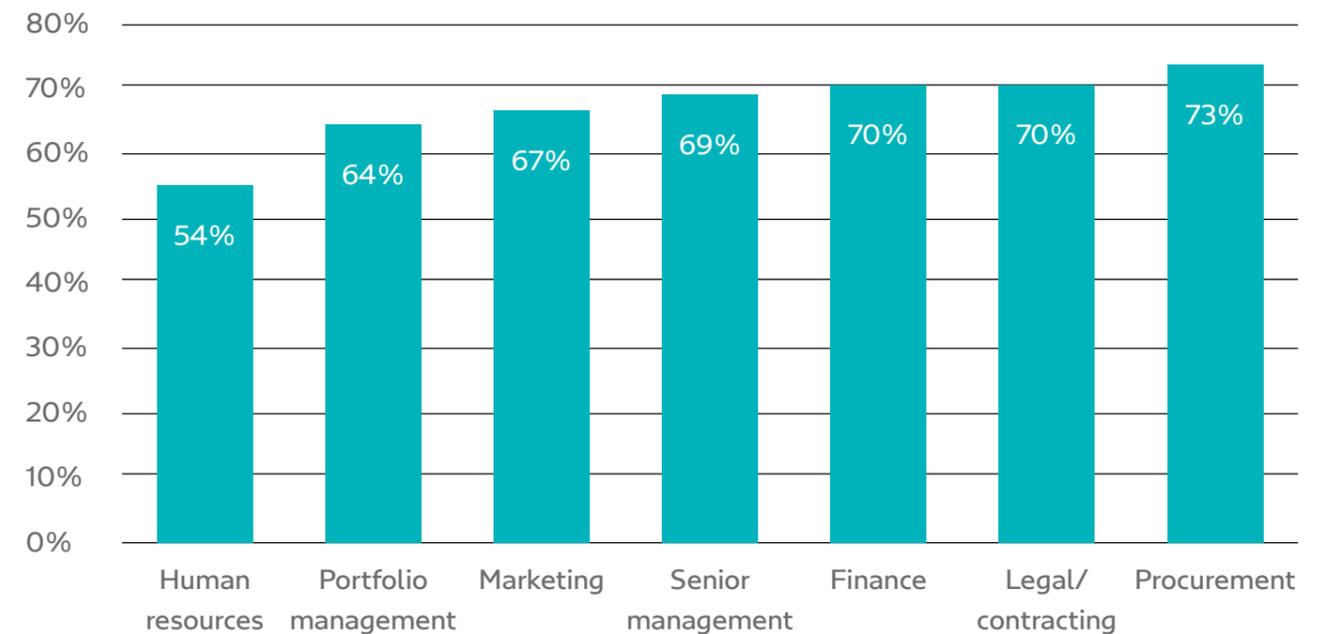
Business support to agile practices

69%
ME

81%
High agility in ME

In the Middle East **69%** of the participants confirmed that senior management support individuals and business units or functional area in being more agile, compared to 81% in organisations with high agility in Middle East, and **93%** in organisations with high agility in the global results.

- 🟨 Agile
- 🟪 Traditional, waterfall approach
- 🟦 Hybrid

High agility
- Agile: 45%
- Traditional, waterfall approach: 15%
- Hybrid: 3%

Limited aglity
- Agile: 20%
- Traditional, waterfall approach: 18%
- Hybrid: 3%

Low/no agility
- Agile: 15%
- Traditional, waterfall approach: 31%
- Hybrid: 8%

Support to agile from various business areas

Business area	Support
Human resources	54%
Portfolio management	64%
Marketing	67%
Senior management	69%
Finance	70%
Legal/contracting	70%
Procurement	73%

How agility is supported ?

66%
ME

85%
High agility in ME

66% of Middle East participants confirmed that government regulations enable adoption of new approaches and practices , compared to 85% in organisations with high agility.
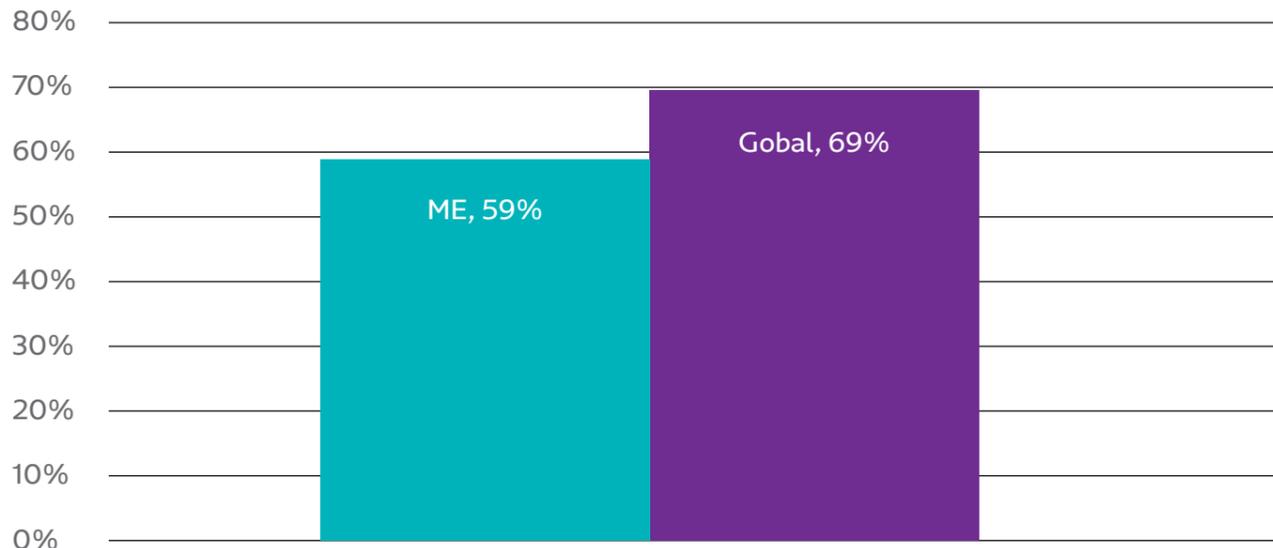
62%
ME

88%
High agility in ME

62% of Middle East participants confirmed that their organisation defines standards related to agile practices and approaches , compared to 88% in organisations with high agility.

Access to those who adopted agile in the organisation

I am given access to others in my organisation who have adopted agile approaches

57%
ME

64 %
High agility in ME

57% of participants in the Middle East are provided tools to support new practices and approaches , compared to only 64% in organisations with high agility.

60%
ME

84 %
High Agility in ME

60% of participants in the Middle East confirmed that Human Resource departments provides training opportunities related to agile practices and approaches, compared to 84% in case of organisations with high agility.

81%
ME

70%
High Agility in ME
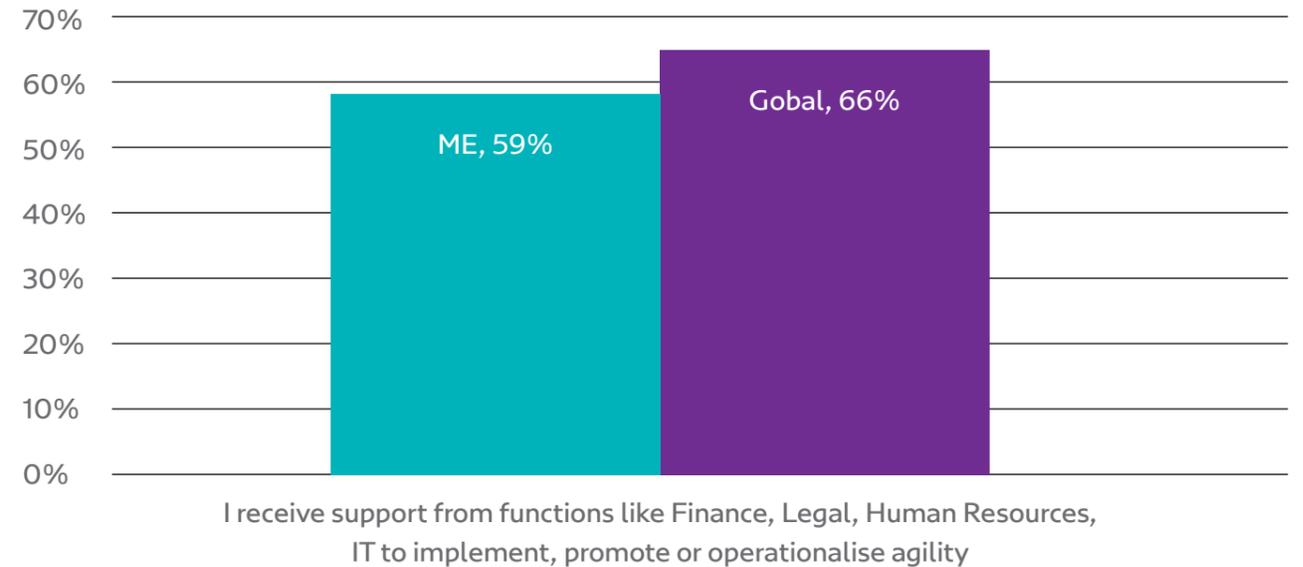
61% of participants in the Middle East confirmed that Human Resources works with them to hire people with the necessary skills oriented towards agile practices and approaches, compared to 70% in case of organisations with high agility.

I receive support from functions like Finance, Legal, Human Resources, IT to implement, promote or operationalise agility

62%
ME

70%
High Agility in ME

62% of participants in the Middle East confirmed that their organisation has incentives or recognition of the importance of agile approaches and practices , compared to 70% in case of organisations with high agility.

63%
ME

64 %
High Agility in ME

63% of participants in the Middle East confirmed that the Procurement function ensures contract negotiations are more customer centric and include more shared–risk–reward relationships , compared to 64% in case of organisations with high agility.

Change management culture

44%
ME

The Board of Directors role in change management in ME is more obvious when compared to individual senior leaders. 44% of the ME participants confirmed that their Board of directors has the greatest influence in creating a change management culture, compared to 20% only in the global survey results, and 28% confirmed that senior leadership/executive team has the greatest effect compared to 41% in the global survey results.

- ■ ME Results
- ■ Global Results

	Our Board of Directors	Our senior leadership/ executive team (e.g.CFO, senior executives)	Our CEO	Divisional or regional leaders
ME	44%	28%	27%	1%
Global	20%	41%	31%	8%

61%
ME

73%
High Agility in ME

61% of Middle East participants confirmed that they receive support changing the culture of my function/team , compared to 73% in organisations with high agility.
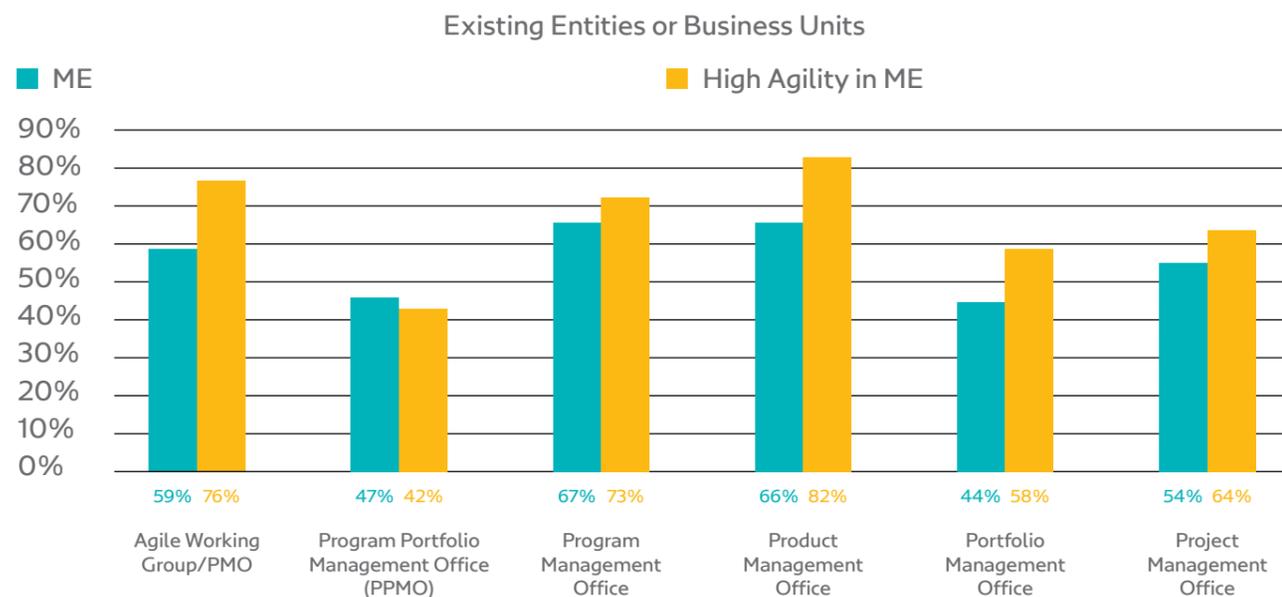
59%
ME

76%
High Agility in ME

59% of participants reported that they have an Agile working group/PMO compared to 76% in organisations with High Agility in the Middle East.

Existing Entities or Business Units

- ■ ME
- ■ High Agility in ME

|	Agile Working Group/PMO	Program Portfolio Management Office (PPMO)	Program Management Office	Product Management Office	Portfolio Management Office	Project Management Office
ME	59%	47%	67%	66%	44%	54%
High Agility in ME	76%	42%	73%	82%	58%	64%

Measuring performance of agile projects

70%
High Agility in ME

Measuring performance in agile projects I different from the traditional ones. 70% of high agile organisations agreed that portfolio management was able to effectively measure performance of agile projects. Most participants had some kind of agreement about ability to measure performance of agile projects

Is portfolio able to measure agile projects performance?

- ■ ME
- ■ High Agility in ME
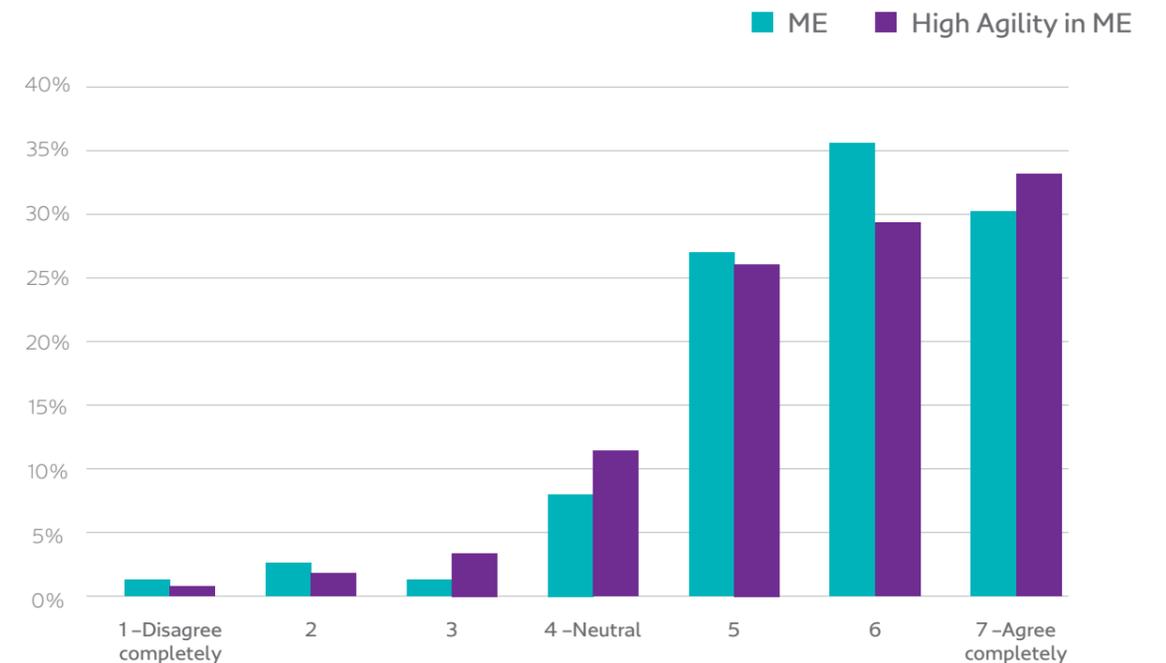
|	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ME	1%	2%	1%	7%	26%	34%	29%
GLOBAL	0%	1%	3%	11%	25%	28%	32%

73%
High Agility in ME

organisations with High Agility in Middle East found that Portfolio Management is able to support other agile oriented practices (e.g., prioritizing, resourcing, etc.)

Agility characteristics

High agility oganisations in ME showed more flexibility: 70% of high agility ME participants confirmed that they can easily add or change product or service offerings, 67% confirmed that they are innovative, and also that they can make decisions quickly. 64% confirmed that they can easily introduce new business models.

■ **High Agility Organisations**

■ **ME Average**

67% 50%	64% 48%	67% 47%	70% 46%	61% 50%
We are innovative	Easily introduce new business models	Make decisions quickly	Easily add or change product or service offerings	Adaptation to changing market conditions

Ability to introduce New Business Models

64% < **87%**
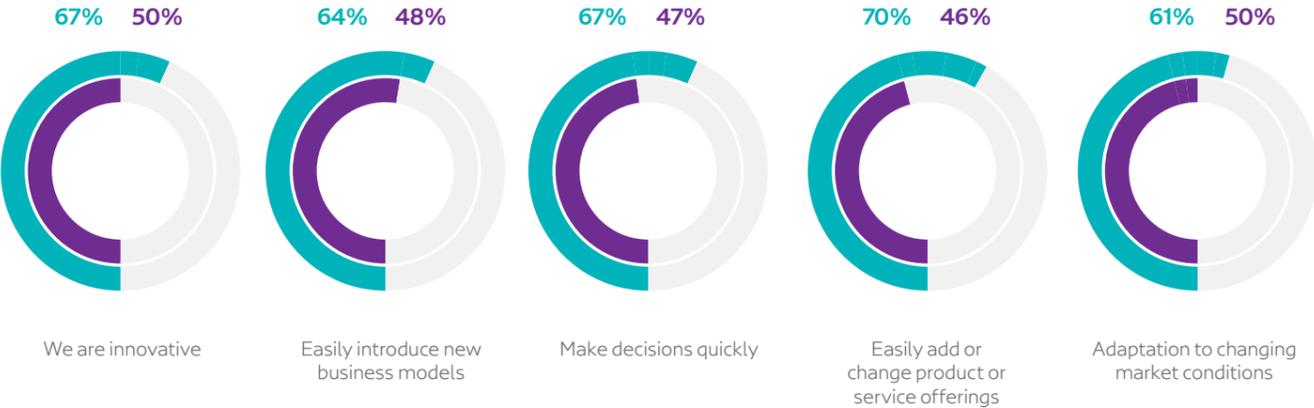
ME High Agile   Global High Agile

The Ability to introduce new business models was significant in high agile organisations on the global level (87%), compared to only 64% in ME high agile organisations.

Forming networks and collaboration

61% < **88%**

ME High Agile   Global High Agile

Forming networks and collaboration with partners was significant in high agile organisations on the global level 88%), compared to only 61 % in ME high agile organisations

Agile, hybrid, versus traditional

High agility organisations in ME confirmed better ability to be "fast to market"/deliver projects, programs and results quickly, to effectively work with the project team, and to implement small teams that can adjust and pivot quickly.

- Agile
- Hybrid
- Traditional

73% **67%** **61%**

Ability to be "fast to market" / deliver projects, programs and results quickly

70% **61%** **64%**

Ability to effectively work with the project team

67% **58%** **52%**
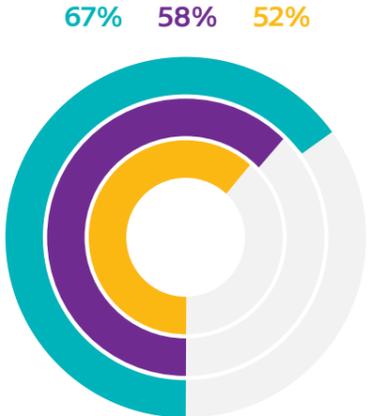
Ability to implement small teams that can adjust and pivot quickly

High agility organisations in ME confirmed better ability to easily introduce new business models, to innovate, to understand stakeholder/customer needs, to respond and adapt to changing market conditions and other external factors, and to reduce the size of many of our projects to allow them to be completed quickly.

| Agile	Hybrid	Traditional	
52%	55%	45%	Ability to reduce the size of many of our projects to allow them to be completed quickly
42%	55%	52%	Ability respond and adapt to changing market conditions andother external factors
61%	64%	58%	Ability to understand stakeholder/customer needs
61%	67%	55%	Ability to innovate
58%	70%	55%	Ability to easily introduce new business models

Top needs to adopt agility

34%
Need to Improve the Experience of our Customers

33%
Reduce Costs

32%
Empower Employees

31%
Grow Revenue

30%
Improve Employee Retention

28%
Increase Employee Satisfaction

28%
Attract Higher Skilled Employees

27%
Address Evolving Customer Expectations

34% ME
58% High Agility in ME

33% ME
42% High Agility in ME
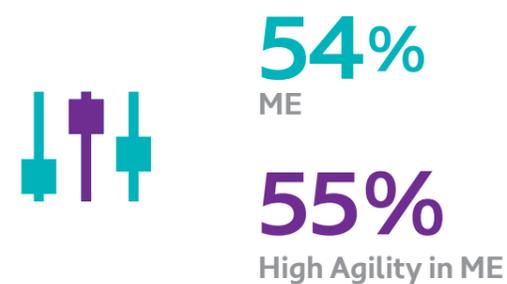
The need to improve customer experience came on the tops of reasons to adopt approaches that make the organisation more agile as chosen by 34% of participants, this goes up to 58% in case of high agile organisations.
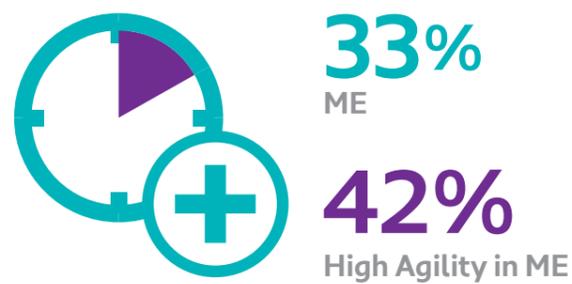
The need to reduce cost came on the second place within the reasons to adopt approaches that make the organisation more agile as chosen by 33% of participants, this goes up to 42% in case of high agile organisations.

Realised benefits from agility

54%
Improved Control Over Major Projects

51%
Reduce Costs

49%
Improved Product / Service Quality

48%
Increased Revenues

47%
The Ability to Terminate Failing Projects Earlier in Their Lifecycle

43%
More Differentiation in the Market

40%
More Empowered Employees

39%
Better Use of Digital Technology in our Business

54% ME
55% High Agility in ME

51% ME
45% High Agility in ME

54% of participants confirmed that Improved Control over major projects was realized as the result of adopting approaches and practices, compared to 55% in organisations with High Agility In the Middle East.
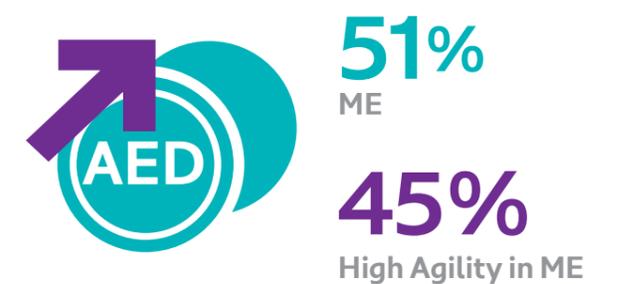
51% of participants confirmed that reduced costs were realized as the result of adopting approaches and practices, compared to 45% in organisations with High Agility In the Middle East.

Conclusions and recommendations

Several observations and conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the survey results:

1. Senior Management in the Middle East supports the adaptation of Agile Practices
2. The level of Agile adaptation in the Middle East is comparable to the global level and more importantly the use of Agile practices in the Middle East is on the rise
3. Adapting agile practices results in improved control over projects performance and costs
4. Agility leads to higher levels of organizational performance including:
   a. Better achievement of the organizations' strategic objectives
   b. Higher ability to innovate and introduce new products and services
   c. Faster and better adaptation to changing market conditions

For organizations in the Middle East and elsewhere to realize the benefits of Agility on both the Projects and Organization Level, it is recommended that they take several positive steps towards Agile deployment including:

1. Gaining and maintaining top management support and commitment to Agility
2. Developing and deploying their own Agile Project Management practices based on the industry, the local conditions and the organization's internal culture (one size does not fit all, especially in agile)
3. Developing a general awareness program of Agility and Agile Practices among executives to ensure buy-in and commitment at all levels
4. Training Project Management Professionals at all levels (project, program and portfolio) on agile methodologies and the organization's own agile practices
5. Regularly communicating the benefits of Agile adaptation with to ensure continued buy-in and commitment

Agility Improves Performance

Top management Supports Agility

Agility Supports Innovation

This Study was conducted by PMI® , Middle East Results were shared with RTA (Roads and transport Authority – Dubai-UAE

This report was prepared by RTA

622 Organisations participated in the Global Survey

153 Organisation belong to ME , mainly UAE and KSA

High Agility organisation were identified based on a combination of self-assessments about the level of agility and the extent to which they have successfully adopted agile practices

This Study will be shared in DIPMF (Dubai International Project Management Forum) **November-2017**

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