Lessons Learned from the PMMM Research Series[1]

Maturity Evolution: Benchmark Organizations in Project Management[2]

Case: Moura Batteries

By João Victor da Nobrega and Allan Bruno da Silva Andrade

1 – ABOUT BATERIAS MOURA (Moura Batteries)

Baterias Moura is a leading battery manufacturer in South America, with nearly 70 years of history marked by innovation, sustainability, and a strong commitment to excellence. Headquartered in Belo Jardim, Pernambuco, the company employs approximately 7,000 people and operates eight manufacturing facilities in Brazil and one in Argentina. Its broad distribution network ensures nationwide coverage in Brazil and presence in several other countries.

The company maintains a robust and diverse project portfolio, encompassing initiatives in technological innovation, industrial capacity expansion, sustainability, digital transformation, and continuous improvement. It currently manages an average of more than 300 projects per year, with a balanced distribution across strategic, tactical, and operational levels.

2 – PMO STRUCTURING

As discussed by Rad and Raghavan (2000) and Sanchez et al. (2017), the use of project management has expanded significantly across organizations, driven by the need to maintain alignment with initial planning. However, high failure rates persist. Rad and Raghavan (2000), for example, analyzed a sample of 8,380 information technology projects across various sectors and found that only 16.2% were successfully completed within scope, time, and budget. The report "The CHAOS Manifesto 2020: Beyond Infinity," produced by the Standish Group, found that 19% of projects end up failing, with the key success factors being an effective sponsor, a qualified team, and a suitable organizational environment. These data

[1] *The Project Management Maturity series of articles by Prof Darci Prado is based on his extensive research on this topic in Brazil and other countries. Darci is the developer of the Prado Project Management Maturity Model which has been successfully implemented by many organizations in Brazil. More about this model and related research can be found at. https://maturityresearch.com/en/home-en/*

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reinforce that, despite their strategic relevance and potential benefits, many projects still fail to achieve the intended results.

Given this panorama of high project failure rates, even with advances in management practices, the need for organizational mechanisms that strengthen governance, promote greater strategic alignment, and ensure better success rates becomes evident. The creation of Project Management Offices (PMOs) has established itself as a fundamental strategic initiative to promote greater organizational alignment and maximize value delivery.

According to the *PMBOK® Guide – Seventh Edition*, PMOs contribute to improved project performance across multiple dimensions such as schedule, cost, quality, and risk. They also act as key facilitators connecting project work with strategic objectives, promoting stakeholder engagement, talent development, and clearer perception of the value created by project investments (PMBOK, 2021).
In this context, in 2014, Baterias Moura established a local PMO within the Engineering Department, focused on guiding, supporting, and monitoring the execution of Product Engineering projects, directly contributing to risk mitigation, efficient resource allocation, and achieving expected results with greater consistency and predictability.

Initially, the PMO had a lean structure of just two employees and a relatively small portfolio. Despite its limited initial scope, the challenge was significant. The company faced a scenario of low project management maturity, with poorly standardized practices (lack of consistent methodology), a lack of consolidated indicators, and resistance to change from some departments. The cultural shift required to consolidate a structured project management approach required time and persistence. It was necessary to demonstrate, in practice, the value of professional project management to internal clients, building trusting relationships, and delivering consistent results.

3 – MATURITY EVOLUTION

In this context, the Project Management Maturity Survey, based on Professor Darci Prado's MMGP model, was adopted from the outset as an essential tool for both diagnosis and guidance. The initial measurement, conducted in 2014, revealed a maturity level of 2.1, reinforcing the perception that significant improvement was needed.

From that point forward, the survey was administered annually, serving as a strategic guide for the PMO's development. Based on each year's results, specific improvement actions were defined, including the creation of methodologies, team training, implementation of tools, and the structuring of governance. Progress was gradual but consistent, always respecting the organization's pace and fostering engagement across all departments involved. From the beginning, the focus was not on speed of implementation, but rather on the sustainability of results.

Chart 1 below illustrates this continuous progress, showing the maturity evolution from the "Started level" 2 in 2014 to level 4 ("Managed") in 2024.

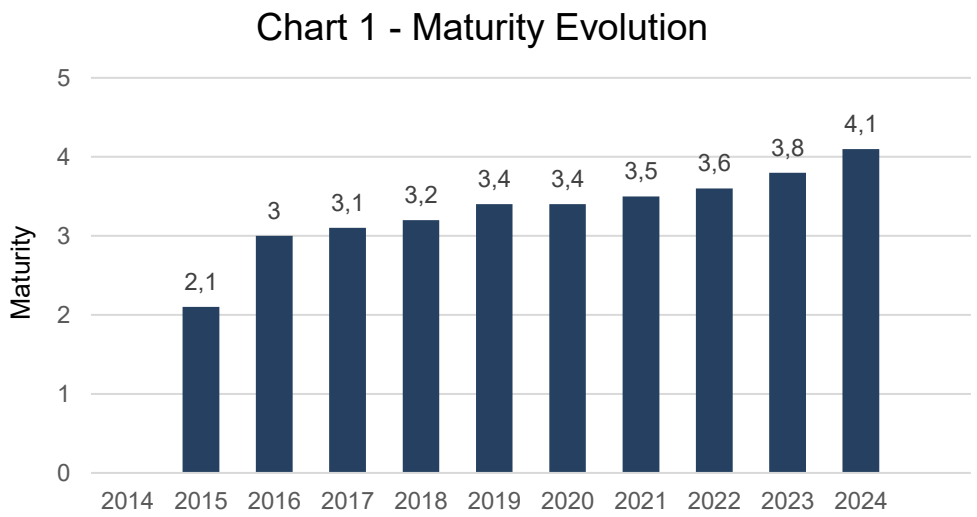


Chart 2 provides a comparison between maturity level scores from 2015 and 2024, clearly reflecting the significant improvements over the years.

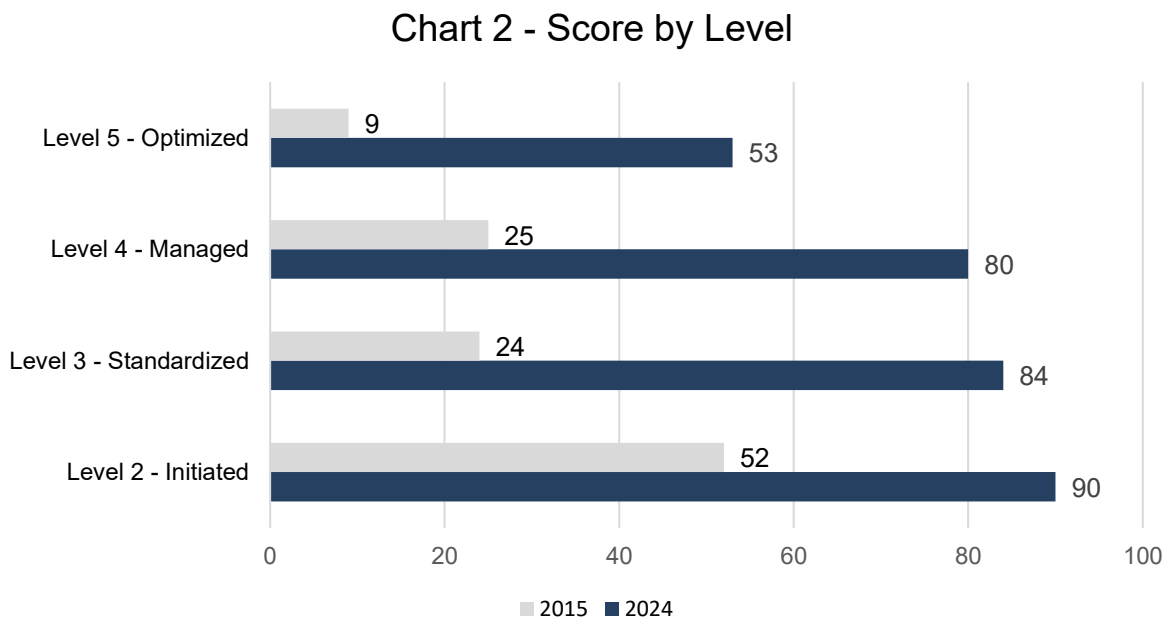
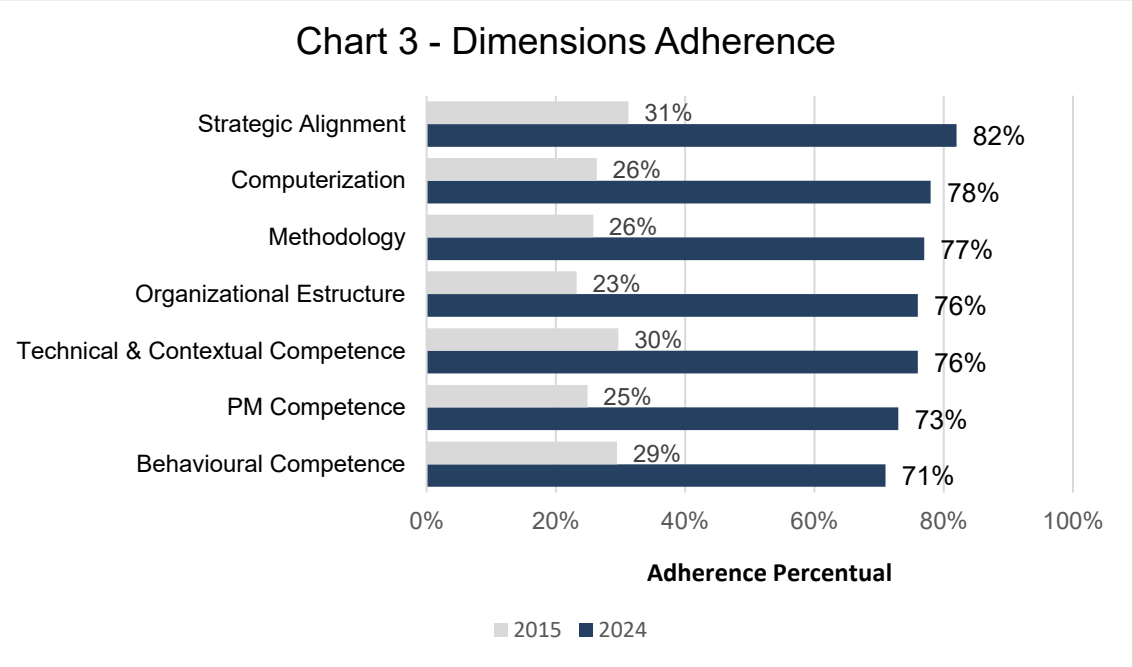


Chart 3 presents adherence to each of the maturity dimensions evaluated in the survey, further confirming this positive trajectory.



4 – CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The evolution of Baterias Moura's PMO over more than a decade has been supported by several factors that became pillars of its success. The key contributors to this journey of excellence include:

- **Strategic alignment and autonomy:** The PMO currently reports directly to the General Director through the Strategy, PMO, and Profitability Manager. With a PMO Manager and a team of 17 people, compatible with the complexity of the portfolio, the department ensures authority, visibility, and influence in corporate decisions. This strategic position ensures that the project portfolio is always aligned with organizational objectives.

- **Robust organizational structure and consistent methodology**: Operating on three fronts—investments, industrial projects, and R&D&I projects—the PMO operates with its own methodology based on the PMO Value Ring (PMI PMOGA), which ensures governance, clarity of scope, and efficient execution.

- **Technological integration with PPM (Project and Portfolio Management**): the adoption of an integrated portfolio management platform connected to our ERP, which allows for a real-time view of projects, strengthening data-driven decision-making.

- **Culture of learning and community:** the creation of the Moura Project School—structured as a true in-house mini-MBA—is one of the pillars of the organization's ongoing project management training, with modules available to the entire organization. With an average of seven modules per year, the program offers training on essential topics such as Project Fundamentals, Integration Management, Scope, Stakeholders, Artificial Intelligence, Agile Methodologies, among others, totaling over 700 hours of development over the years. This initiative, combined with internal events, fosters talent development, the sharing of best practices, and the strengthening of the project management ecosystem, both inside and outside the organization.

- **Generation of measurable value**: the use of indicators such as NPS (Net Promoter Score, which evaluates both the service provided by the manager, customer satisfaction and project results), IQP (Project Quality Index, which is the average of three indexes that evaluate the efficiency of time, scope and cost, offering an integrated view of project performance) and the maturity level itself (MMGP) reinforces the commitment to concrete deliveries and to the generation of value for the organization and for society.

- **Flexibility and Adaptability**: The PMO's approach demonstrates its ability to adapt to the current situation, without losing sight of governance principles and a focus on value. This flexibility has been essential in responding to challenging scenarios, such as during the pandemic, when the PMO required strategic action to quickly review and adapt the project portfolio, prioritizing critical initiatives and adjusting resources according to new business demands. Likewise, during periods of high sales demand, the PMO has played a key role in enabling investments in projects aimed at expanding production capacity, ensuring agility in decision-making and alignment with the organization's strategic objectives.

- **Benchmarking with other companies and market references**: Active participation in events, conferences, and awards ceremonies has always been viewed by the organization as a strategy for continuous learning and evolution. This approach has strengthened the PMO's position as a national and international benchmark, in addition to fostering valuable exchanges with other organizations.

These factors, combined with strong senior leadership sponsorship and an organizational culture focused on excellence, were crucial to consolidating a PMO that not only delivers projects but also transforms strategy into sustainable results.

5– BENEFITS ACHIEVED

The decade-long journey of Baterias Moura's PMO has resulted in concrete, measurable, and sustainable benefits that directly impact the company's performance and strategic alignment. The consolidation of project management as a core organizational competency has produced improvements across multiple dimensions.

A project-oriented culture has taken root at all levels of the organization, supported by standardized practices, a shared vocabulary, and cross-functional collaboration. This increasing maturity has led to continuous improvements in key performance indicators, with more predictable delivery, tighter control of scope, schedule, and cost, and a significant reduction in deviations.

Portfolio management has also matured, with project selection and prioritization becoming more aligned with the company's strategic objectives. The portfolio is now managed based on clear criteria for value, risk, and impact.

Recent Results (2023–2024)

Between 2023 and 2024, the organization recorded notable progress:

- **9%** increase in the number of projects executed
- **73%** reduction in project delay rate
- **5%** reduction in budget overrun rate
- **25%** improvement in cost efficiency

Moreover, the sustainability of results is evidenced by the continuous improvement in project management maturity, measured annually by the Prado-MMGP Maturity Survey. The organization's maturity level rose from **2.1 in 2014** to **4.1 in 2024**, reflecting a solid, consistent trajectory focused on value creation.

These benefits not only reinforce the PMO's importance within the company but also position Baterias Moura as a national benchmark in project management—with a structure that transforms strategy into concrete results.

6– RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Over the past decade, the history of Baterias Moura's PMO has been marked not only by consistent results but also by significant recognition nationwide. These awards reflect the organization's commitment to excellence in project management and the maturity it has gained over time.

Key highlights include:

- **6-time winner** of the *Best PMO in the State of Pernambuco* (2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023)
- **3-time finalist** for the *Best PMO in Brazil* by *Mundo PM Magazine* and *PMI-PMOGA* (2018, 2022, and 2023)
- **Winner of the Best PMO in Brazil (2024)** by *PMI-PMOGA – PMO Brazil Awards 2024*
- **1st place in the Americas (2025)** in the *PMI-PMOGA – PMI PMO Global Awards 2025*, a global competition currently underway

These achievements reflect an organizational culture that prioritizes continuous learning, innovation, and management excellence. For Baterias Moura, participating in events, conferences, and award programs has always been a strategic opportunity to benchmark, learn, and grow. These moments have allowed the company not only to share best practices but also to absorb valuable insights from other organizations, further strengthening the PMO's performance and its contribution to company-wide results.

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