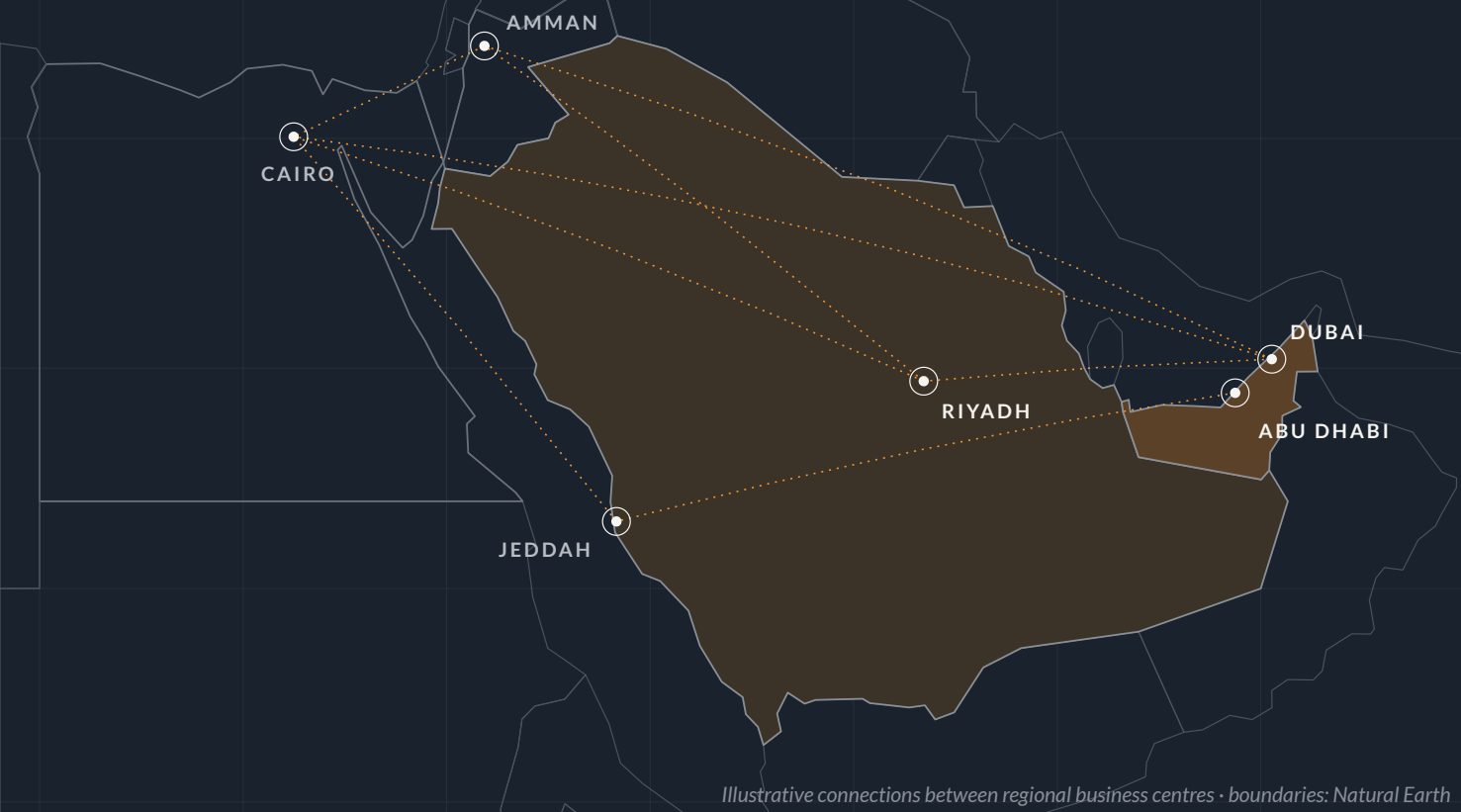
STRATEGIC FORESIGHT STUDY · MIDDLE EAST · 2026–2030

BEYOND THE CALENDAR

The Future of Executive Assistants in the Middle East

How Geopolitics and Artificial Intelligence Could Reshape Executive Support by 2030



Illustrative connections between regional business centres · boundaries: Natural Earth

ProAssist SOLUTIONS

November 2026 | Strategic Foresight Study

Scenarios are plausible alternative futures, not predictions

AI can execute the plan.

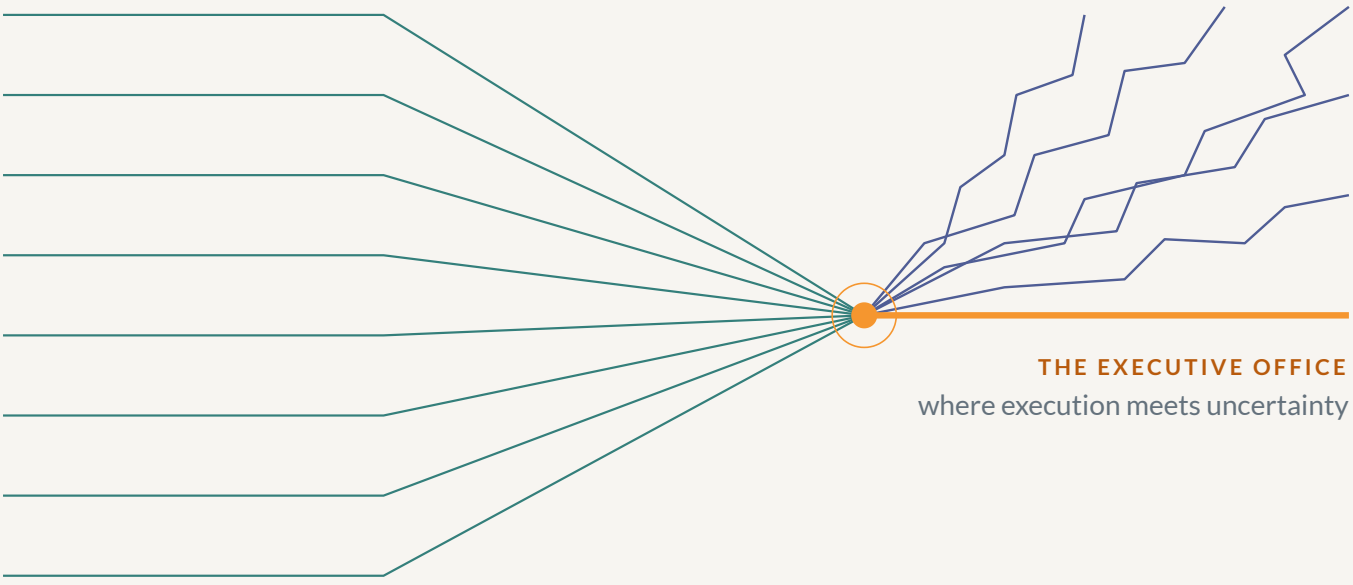
Who keeps the executive moving when the plan breaks?

FORCE 01 — ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Makes routine execution faster, cheaper and increasingly autonomous.

FORCE 02 — GEOPOLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

Makes executive operations less predictable and more demanding.



THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

where execution meets uncertainty

The intersection matters more than either trend alone.

Conceptual diagram. Line counts and angles carry no data.

Contents

I — OPENING

02 The provocation

04 The foresight methodology

II — EVIDENCE

05 The profession under pressure

06 Two forces, one executive office

07 The Middle East operating context

III — ANALYSIS

08 STEEP: five forces reshaping support

09 From tasks to executive systems

10 How regional shocks reach the office

11 AI, trust and executive risk

IV — FUTURES

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14 01 · The Lean Executive Office

15 02 · The Crisis Navigator

16 03 · The Traditional Gatekeeper

17 04 · The Overloaded Fixer

V — IMPLICATIONS

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19 Five capabilities of a resilient EA

20 Early-warning signals

VI — ACTION & CLOSE

21 The 90-day action roadmap

22 The working hypothesis

23 Sources and research notes

How to read this study

Every page carries one of four evidence markers

■ VERIFIED RESEARCH

Findings from published external sources, cited on the page and listed in the sources.

□ OBSERVED SIGNALS

Trends and early indicators visible today, but not yet conclusive.

◇ ANALYSIS

Our interpretation, including frameworks proposed by ProAssist Solutions for testing.

⬚ 2030 SCENARIO

Plausible alternative futures. Not predictions; the events described have not happened.

COLOUR CODE Artificial intelligence · Geopolitical disruption · Human judgment and accountability

A Disciplined Exploration of Alternative Futures

Five stages move the study from what can be observed today to what organizations can do about it — with the complexity of the work increasing at each step.

STAGE 01

Horizon Scanning

Collect signals and evidence — published research, policy, technology developments and operating events relevant to executive support.



STAGE 02

STEEP Analysis

Sort signals across five external forces: social, technological, economic, environmental and political.



STAGE 03

Critical Uncertainties

Identify the pivotal unknowns — those that are both high-impact and genuinely unresolved.



STAGE 04

Scenario Development

Combine the two selected uncertainties into four plausible, internally consistent 2030 worlds.



STAGE 05

Strategic Action

Define no-regret actions that hold across all four futures, and the signals that show which one is forming.



GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

PRIMARY FOCUS

UAE and Saudi Arabia

SUPPORTING CONTEXT

Jordan, Egypt and regional corridors

HORIZON

2026 → 2030

A NOTE ON FORESIGHT

Foresight explores alternative futures. It does not predict one inevitable outcome.

Evidence anchors the current state. Scenario stories are explicitly hypothetical.

The Executive Assistant Profession Is Already Changing

Three evidence anchors from global research. None is a Middle East–specific forecast for EA employment; regional conclusions require validation.

ANCHOR 01 · WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

DECLINING ↘

Administrative Assistants and Executive Secretaries

are among the occupational groups employers expect to decline by 2030.

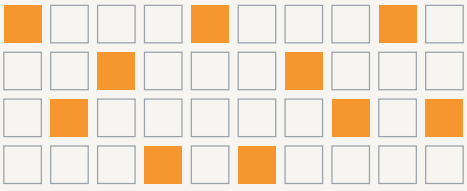
> A **direction**, not a magnitude. This page deliberately shows no percentage for the decline — and the finding is global, based on employer expectations.

Source: World Economic Forum, *The Future of Jobs Report 2025*, January 2025.

ANCHOR 02 · INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

1 in 4 workers globally

are in an occupation with some generative-AI exposure.



some GenAI exposure other workers

Exposure does not automatically equal replacement.

Source: ILO, *Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure*, Working Paper 140, May 2025. Grid is a proportion graphic, not a sample.

ANCHOR 03 · MICROSOFT WORK TREND INDEX

19% of AI users are "Frontier"

— where individual AI capability and organizational readiness are both high.



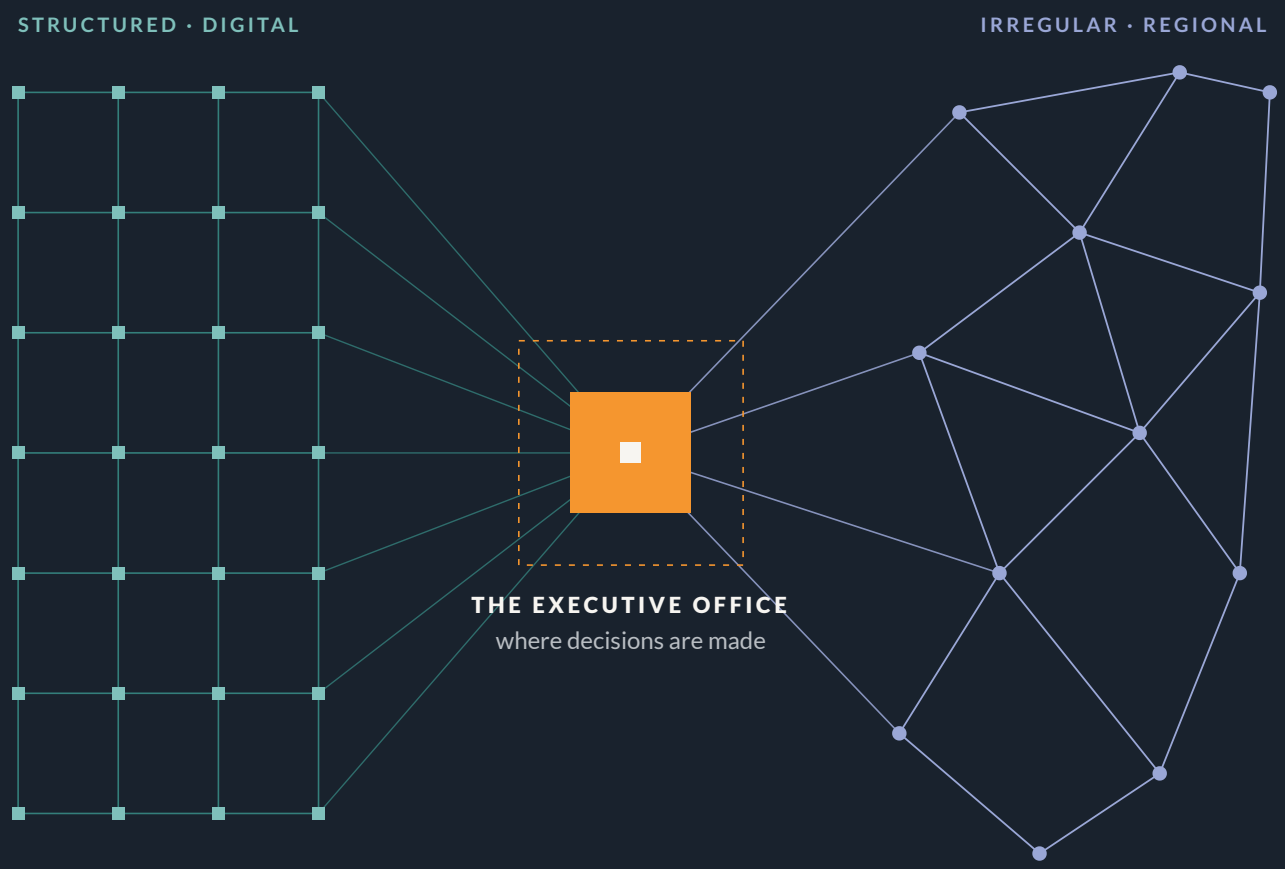
19 Frontier 81 all other AI users, per 100

Population	20,000 knowledge workers who use AI at work
Denominator	AI users — not all workers, not EAs specifically
Coverage	10 markets; fieldwork Feb–Apr 2026

Source: Microsoft WorkLab, *2026 Work Trend Index: Agents, human agency, and the opportunity for every organization*, May 2026.

◇ **Interpretation.** The central question is not whether the occupation changes, but which tasks decline — and which human responsibilities grow.

Two Forces.
One Executive Office.



FORCE 01 · ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Routine task automation

AI-supported research and synthesis

Independent software agents

Faster communication and preparation

FORCE 02 · GEOPOLITICAL VOLATILITY

Regional conflicts and policy shocks

Airspace and travel disruption

Sanctions and regulatory complexity

Changing commercial priorities

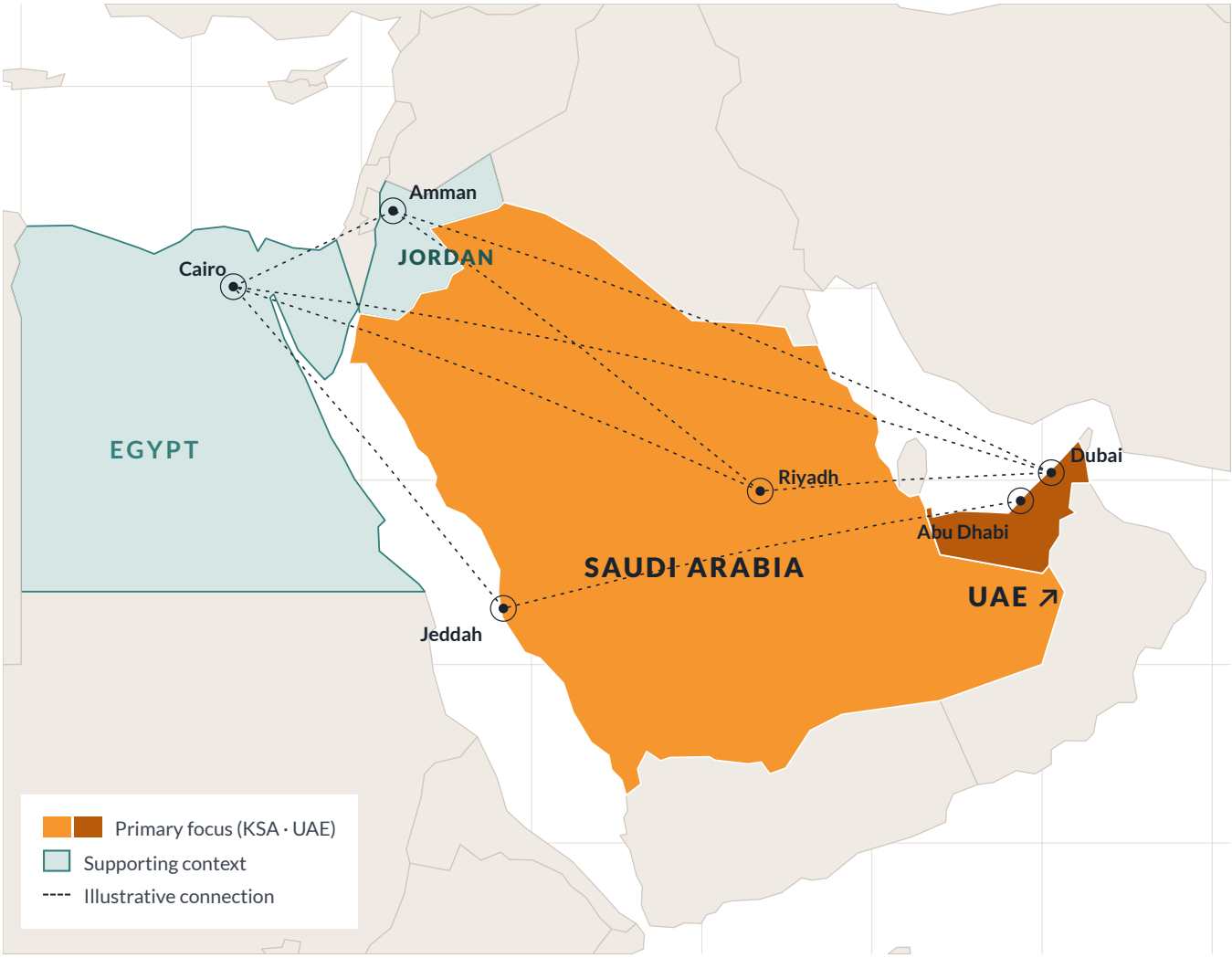
Increased security and trust concerns

◇ AN EMERGING VALUE PROPOSITION — ANALYSIS, NOT A FORECAST

Verified information **+** anticipatory coordination **+** **human judgment**

The Middle East Is Not One Market

UAE and Saudi Arabia provide contrasting operating contexts within a connected region.



Boundaries: Natural Earth 1:110m (public domain), simplified — small states such as Bahrain are not shown at this scale. Dashed lines are illustrative business connections — not verified routes or disruption patterns.

UAE · PRIMARY

National Strategy for AI 2031

National AI ambition, digital government and governance — an evolving model for AI-enabled executive operations.

Source: UAE Artificial Intelligence Office

SAUDI ARABIA · PRIMARY

National Data & AI Strategy

Data and AI investment, workforce ambition and Vision 2030 priorities influence how organizations redesign support work.

Source: Saudi Data & AI Authority (SDAIA)

JORDAN · EGYPT · CONTEXT

Cross-border operations

Part of regional executive itineraries and stakeholder networks, each with its own rules and conditions.

◇ Cross-border scheduling depends on route viability, local rules, stakeholder access and disruption planning — which differ market by market.

Five Forces Reshaping Executive Support

A working signal map for structured research — not a list of proven outcomes.

	FORCE	SIGNALS TO WATCH	IMPLICATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
S	**Social** Responsiveness, cross-cultural coordination and career ambitions	Expectations of 24/7 responsiveness; multilingual stakeholder relationships; changing career aspirations	Availability and cross-cultural coordination become part of the service standard.
T	**Technological** Agents, automation, synthetic communications, identity verification	AI agents, meeting automation, voice synthesis, identity verification and secure workflow design	More execution can be delegated — and more outputs need verifying.
E	**Economic** Cost pressure, role consolidation, productivity demands	Cost pressure, support-role consolidation, investment cycles and changing executive spans	EAs may support wider portfolios; their value must become visible.
E	**Environmental** Climate and environmental risk to travel and continuity	Extreme heat and climate resilience affecting travel and business continuity	Travel and event plans need continuity options built in.
P	**Political** Conflict, sanctions, localization, regulation, policy change	Regional conflict, airspace restrictions, sanctions, localization and cross-border policy changes	Plans need verified alternatives and clear escalation routes.

Weak-signal rule. For every signal, record its source, date, geography, affected EA task, confidence and plausible implication.

Feeds the AI uncertainty

Feeds the geopolitical uncertainty

From Administrative Tasks to Executive Systems

The question is not only "What can AI do?" but "Who owns the outcome?"

TRADITIONAL TASK	AI-ENABLED WORKFLOW	HUMAN ACCOUNTABILITY
Calendar management	→ Priority suggestions and schedule optimization →	**Priority intelligence** Approve trade-offs and protect executive focus
Travel booking	→ Route monitoring and itinerary variants →	**Contingency-aware travel coordination** Verify advisories and manage exceptions
Meeting minutes	→ AI transcription and decision extraction →	**Decision tracking** Validate decisions, owners and sensitivities
Email drafting	→ Context-aware first drafts →	**AI-assisted communications, human-verified** Own tone, confidentiality and authorization
Executive briefing	→ Automated signal synthesis →	**Evidence-checked intelligence synthesis** Check evidence, bias and business relevance

GUARDRAIL

AI drafts and recommends. Accountable people authorize sensitive or irreversible actions.

Accountability is not delegated to AI by default; it moves with the human control point.

When Regional Events Become Executive Problems

One signal. Many consequences. A single, structured response.

01

REGIONAL EVENT

A single signal

02

OPERATING IMPACT

Travel, counterparties, supply chains

03

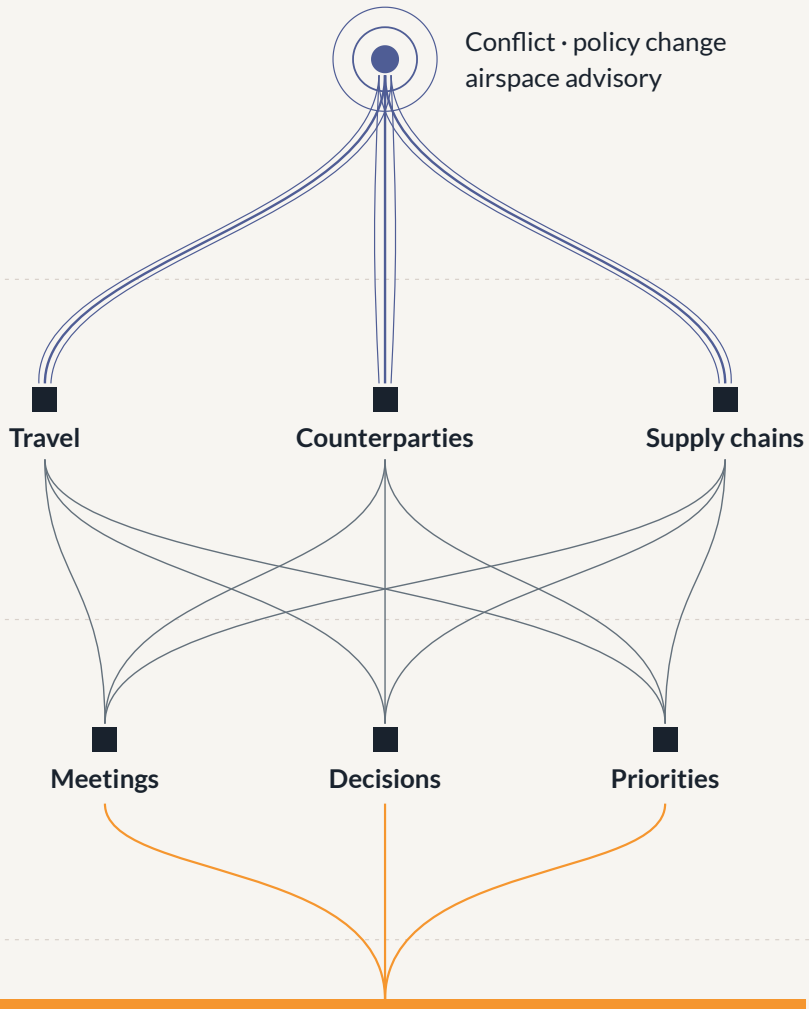
EXECUTIVE DISRUPTION

Meetings, decisions, priorities

04

EA RESPONSE

Calm, structured coordination



THE EA REMIT

Operational awareness + trusted escalation + decision logistics.

Not independent geopolitical or security advice: specialist judgments stay with security, legal and risk functions.

Context. The IMF's October 2026 Regional Economic Outlook for the Middle East and Central Asia describes conflict-related disruption to energy production, shipping, trade and tourism.

The chain itself is an illustrative model; line counts carry no data.

The Next Critical Skill May Be Verification

AI increases productivity — and introduces new failure modes. Each risk below must cross a trust boundary before it reaches the executive.

RISK · UNVERIFIED INPUT	CONTROL · VERIFIED PATH
RISK 01 **Executive impersonation** Voice messages, texts and fraudulent meeting requests	CONTROL Call back via known channels; independent identity checks
RISK 02 **Confidentiality leakage** Sensitive calendar, board, travel and personnel data	CONTROL Approved tools, data classification and access controls
RISK 03 **False confidence in AI outputs** Fluent but incorrect briefings and summaries	CONTROL Evidence checks, cited sources and human sign-off
RISK 04 **Automation exceeding authority** Agent actions beyond user intent or permissions	CONTROL Permission boundaries, audit trails, stop rules and escalation

TRUST BOUNDARY

THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

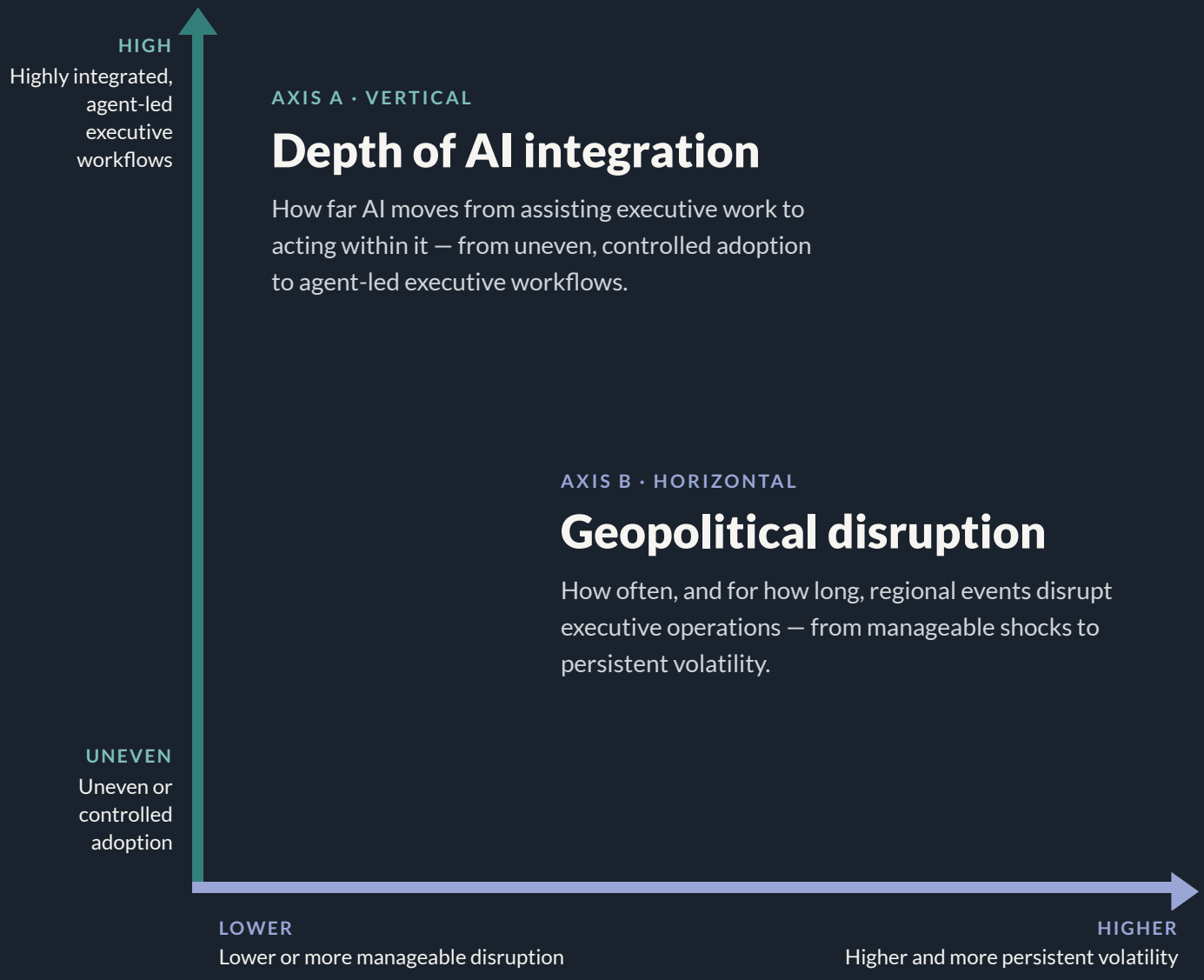
Technology accelerates work. **Trust determines what can safely be delegated.**

Order does not indicate likelihood or severity; no ranking is implied.

Source (Risk 01). FBI public service announcement, May 2025, warning that senior officials were being impersonated through text and AI-generated voice messages.

Two Uncertainties. Four Very Different Futures.

We chose uncertainties that are high-impact and genuinely unresolved. Crossed, they define the four 2030 scenarios that follow.



◇ **Hypothesis.** The value of the EA role depends on both technology maturity and the operating environment — neither alone.

Four Plausible 2030 Futures

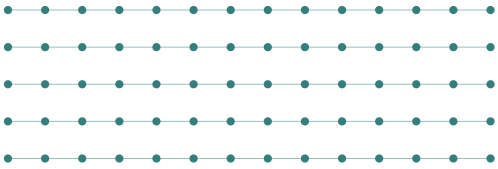
A scenario matrix is a thinking tool, not a probability chart.

AGENT-LED

DEPTH OF AI INTEGRATION

UN-EVEN

HIGH AI · LOWER DISRUPTION

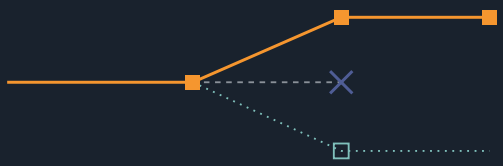


01

The Lean Executive Office

Efficiency wins. Fewer EAs support wider executive portfolios.

HIGH AI · HIGHER DISRUPTION

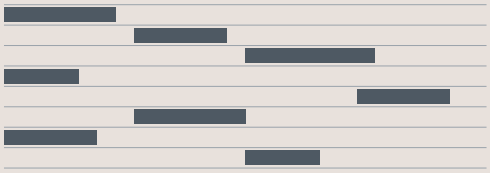


02

The Crisis Navigator

AI monitors options; the EA verifies, coordinates and escalates.

UNEVEN AI · LOWER DISRUPTION

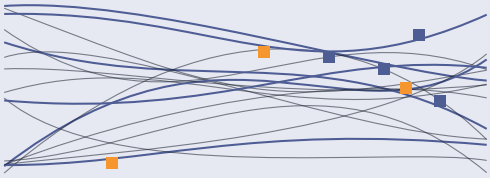


03

The Traditional Gatekeeper

The familiar role persists; coordination remains largely manual.

UNEVEN AI · HIGHER DISRUPTION



04

The Overloaded Fixer

Disruption expands the workload; fragmented tools slow the response.

LOWER DISRUPTION — GEOPOLITICAL DISRUPTION — HIGHER DISRUPTION

How to read it. Each quadrant combines one end of each uncertainty. Position carries no likelihood, score or ranking — and the futures are not mutually exclusive across organizations.

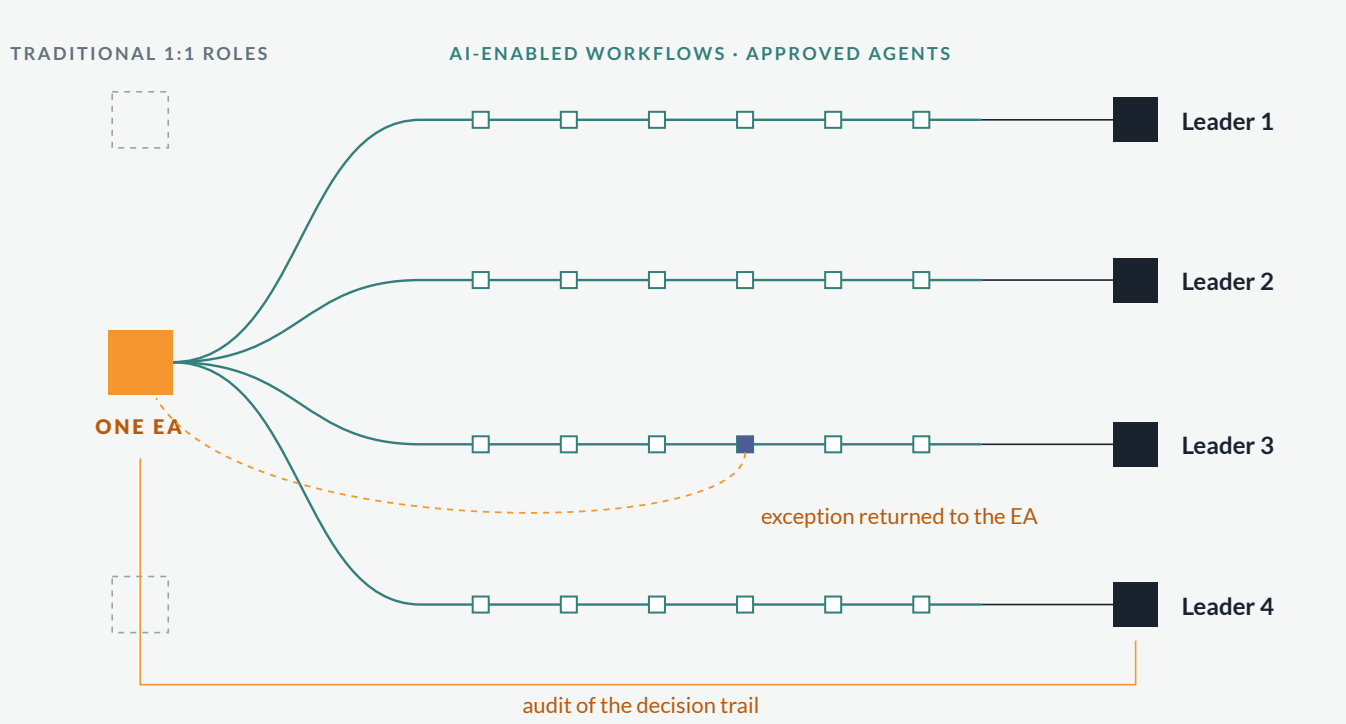
Pages 14–17 explore each world in turn: the operating environment, a day in the life, the capabilities that gain value and the failure mode to watch.

01

THE LEAN EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Efficiency Wins. The EA Portfolio Widens.

High AI integration · **Lower** geopolitical disruption



Illustrative structure. Node counts are not staffing ratios.

2030. Most routine scheduling and correspondence are handled by approved AI systems. With disruption manageable, organizations optimize for efficiency: workflows are standardized and auditable — and fewer EAs support wider executive portfolios.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

One EA supervises the agents supporting several leaders. The morning starts with the exceptions the agents could not resolve; the afternoon ends with an audit of the day's decision trail.

CAPABILITIES THAT GAIN VALUE

Workflow orchestration
Prioritization
Quality assurance

FAILURE MODE

Efficiency gains become role cuts without upgraded authority.

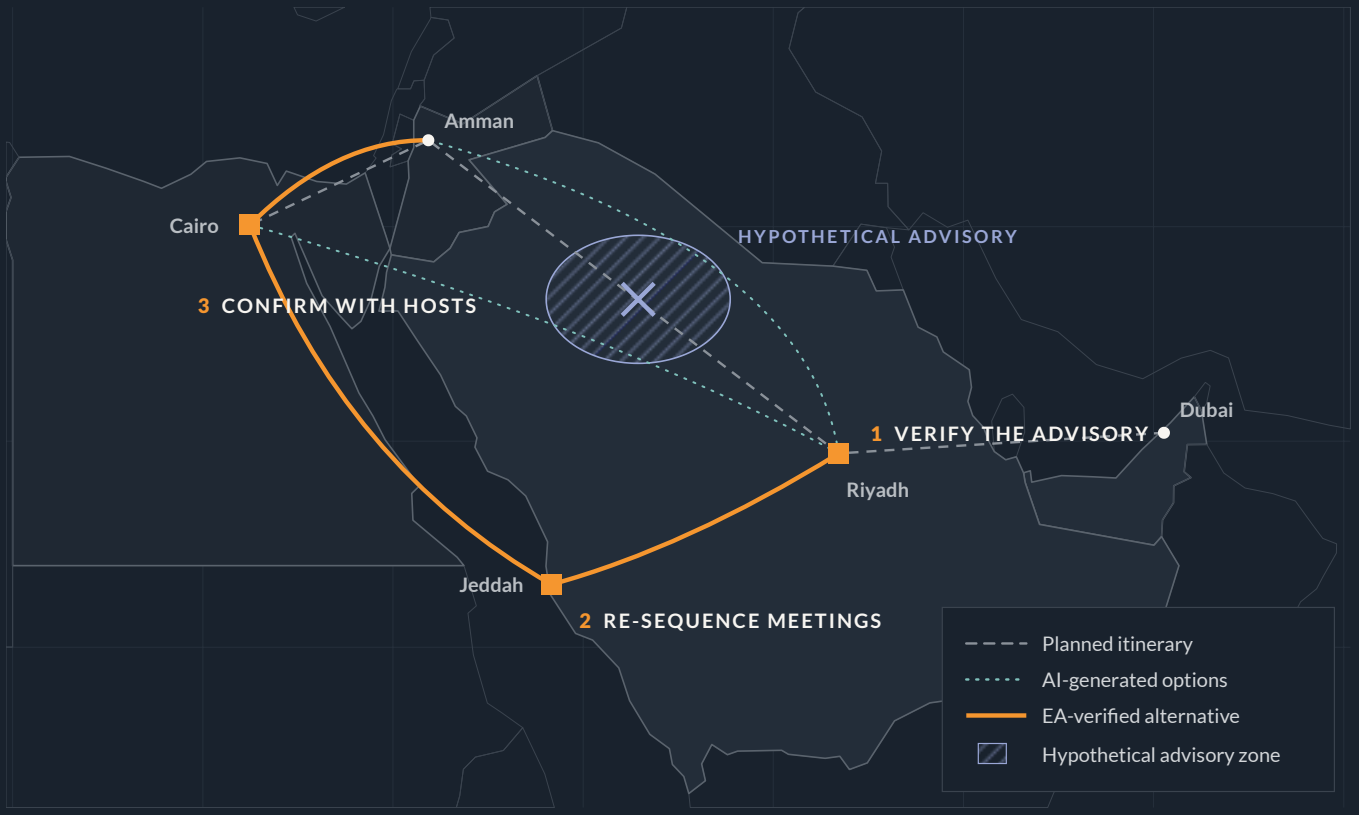
Scenario fiction: a plausible alternative future for 2030. The events described have not happened and are not predicted.

02

THE CRISIS NAVIGATOR

Automation Meets Disruption. Judgment Becomes Scarce.

High AI integration · **Higher** geopolitical disruption



Hypothetical advisory and itinerary. Boundaries: Natural Earth. Not a real event, route or risk assessment.

2030. AI continuously monitors options, but when fast-moving risks hit executive plans, the EA verifies, coordinates and escalates. Speed is abundant; trusted judgment is not.

THE EA COORDINATES WITH

Security	**Travel**
Legal	**Host organizations**

Specialists decide specialist matters. The EA owns the logistics of the decision.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

An airspace advisory interrupts a regional tour. The EA confirms it through official channels, then activates a verified alternative with corporate specialists.

CAPABILITIES THAT GAIN VALUE

Scenario readiness
Trusted escalation
Cultural diplomacy

FAILURE MODE

Overconfident AI outputs trigger bad or unsafe decisions.

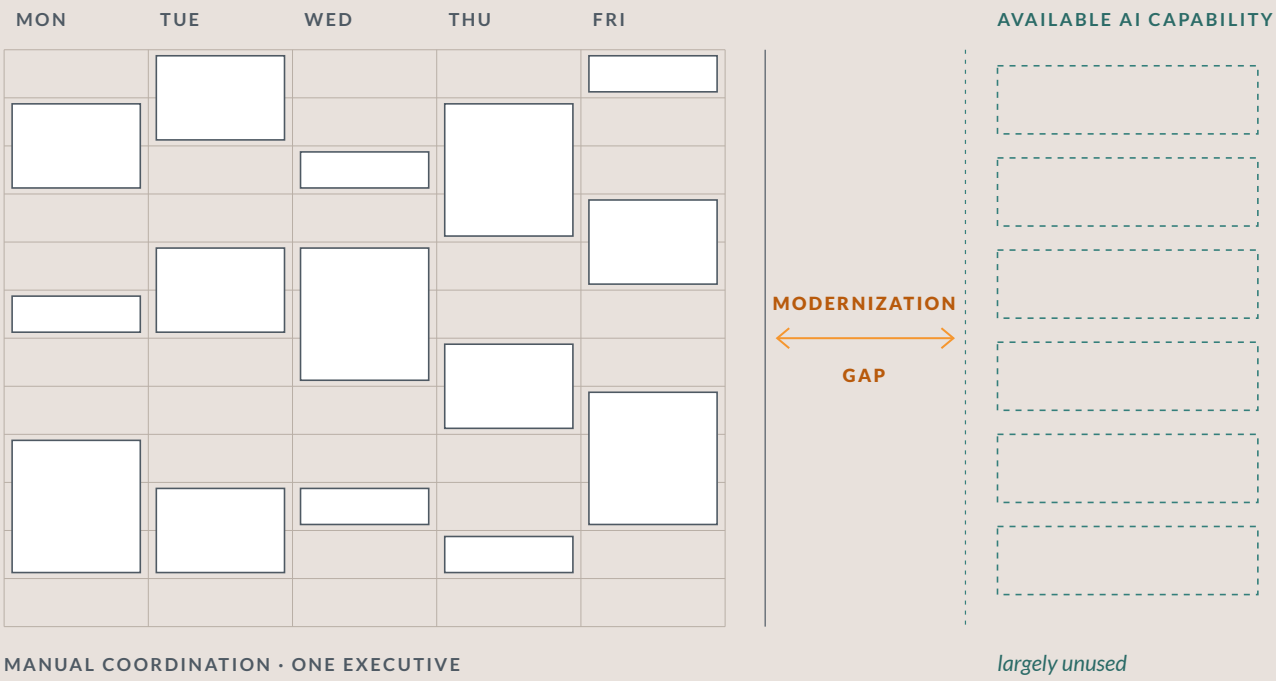
Scenario fiction: a plausible alternative future for 2030. The events described have not happened and are not predicted.

03

THE TRADITIONAL GATEKEEPER

Stable Work Preserves Yesterday's Model.

Uneven AI integration · **Lower** geopolitical disruption



Illustrative. The gap is organizational, not a measure of individual EA capability.

2030. The EA role looks familiar: diary, correspondence and coordination remain largely manual despite available digital tools. Stability rewards reliability — and quietly removes the pressure to modernize.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

A highly capable EA keeps one executive superbly organized. But the process knowledge lives in personal systems — notebooks, inboxes and memory — that no one else can run.

CAPABILITIES THAT GAIN VALUE

Relationship memory
Reliability
Service discipline

FAILURE MODE

Low experimentation creates a widening productivity gap.

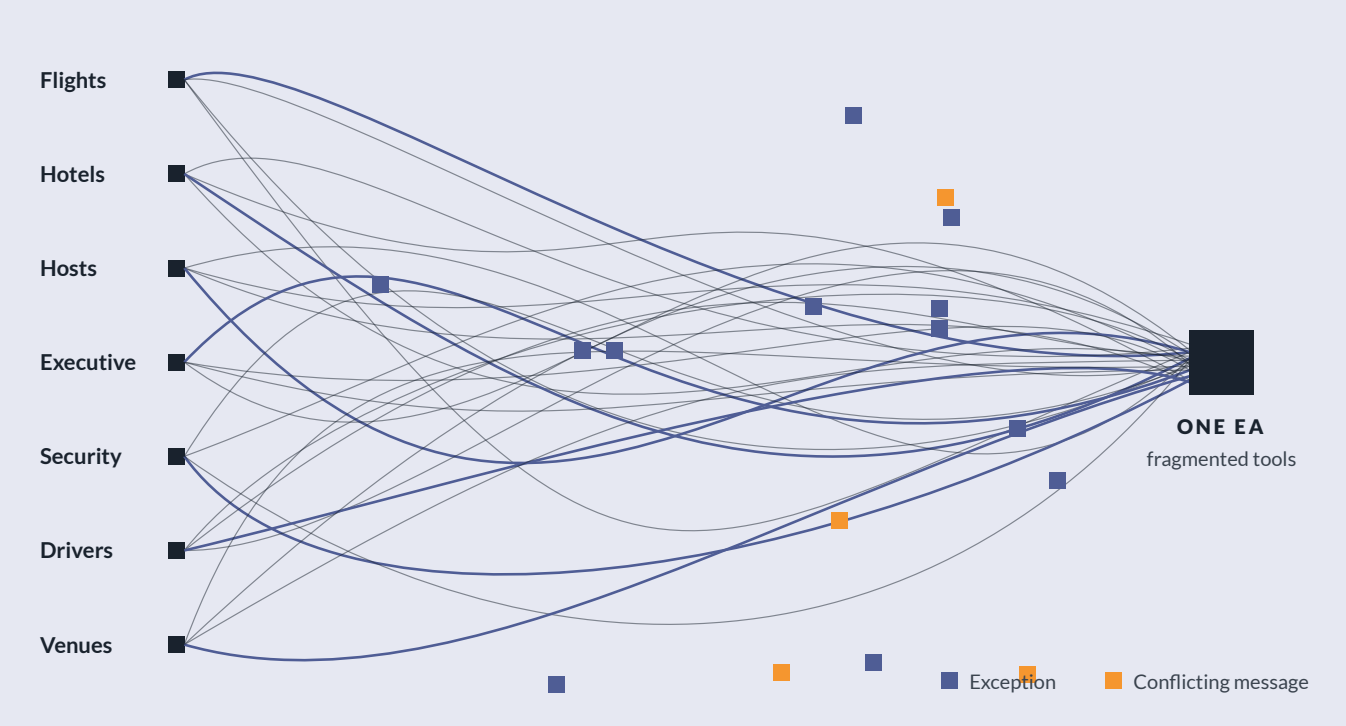
Scenario fiction: a plausible alternative future for 2030. The events described have not happened and are not predicted.

04

THE OVERLOADED FIXER

Complexity Rises Faster Than Capability.

Uneven AI integration · **Higher** geopolitical disruption



Illustrative. Line and exception counts carry no data.

2030. Regional disruption expands the workload, while fragmented tools and unclear authority slow the response. The executive office runs on one person's stamina.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

A travel shock generates dozens of manual revisions, conflicting messages and constant last-minute escalation — each handled by hand, across disconnected tools.

CAPABILITIES THAT GAIN VALUE

Triage
Resilience
Stakeholder networks

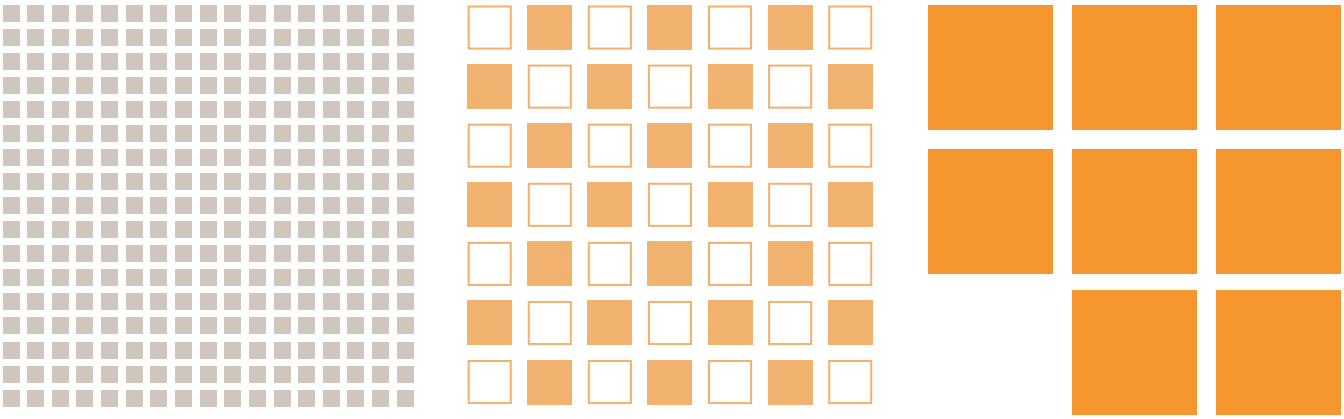
FAILURE MODE

Burnout, errors and key-person dependency become systemic.

Scenario fiction: a plausible alternative future for 2030. The events described have not happened and are not predicted.

The EA Role May Split — Not Simply Disappear

One likely divide: transactional work becomes easier to automate, while high-trust work becomes more valuable.



REPEATABLE TRANSACTIONS ——▶ HIGH-TRUST, AMBIGUITY-INTENSIVE WORK

01 · MORE AUTOMATABLE

Repeatable execution

Routine diary coordination

First drafts

Simple follow-ups

Repeatable research tasks

02 · HYBRID / REDESIGNED

AI-assisted, human-controlled

Executive briefings

Complex travel planning

Prioritization

Decision tracking

03 · HIGH HUMAN VALUE

High trust and ambiguity

Judgment

Confidentiality

Stakeholder diplomacy

Escalation

Crisis coordination

CAVEAT

A more strategic EA position is not guaranteed — and not every EA will become a Chief of Staff.

Zone widths and square counts are not proportions of current EA work. No estimate of how much EA work will be automated is made or implied.

The Five Capabilities of a Resilient Executive Assistant

A proposed development model, to be tested with senior EAs and executives.

THE PROASSIST RESILIENT EA FRAMEWORK

The resilient executive assistant

Faster with AI — and safer, clearer and more effective under uncertainty.

01 AI Workflow Literacy

Know when to automate, where to stop and how to verify.

IN PRACTICE

Keep a register of approved AI uses, each with its human review step.

02 Risk & Contingency Sensing

Recognize early impacts on travel, stakeholders and priorities.

IN PRACTICE

Hold a verified alternative for every critical trip and meeting.

03 Decision Operations

Track options, owners, deadlines, evidence and follow-through.

IN PRACTICE

Maintain a live decision log after every leadership meeting.

04 Stakeholder Diplomacy

Coordinate across cultures, hierarchies and sensitive situations.

IN PRACTICE

Map key stakeholders and their preferred escalation channels.

05 Trust & Information Control

Protect confidential context and validate authority.

IN PRACTICE

Confirm unusual requests through a known second channel.

HOW THE CAPABILITIES COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER

01 + 05

Automate — then verify what leaves the office.

02 + 03

Turn an early risk signal into clear decision options.

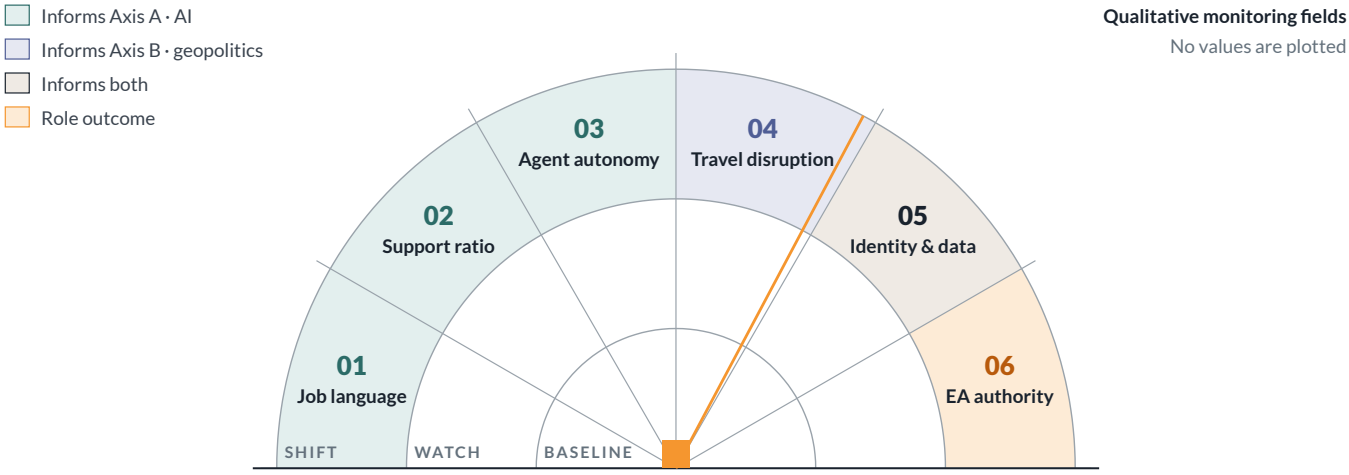
03 + 04

Move decisions through people, across hierarchies and cultures.

The architecture shows how the capabilities work together — not their relative weight. The framework carries no maturity scores and has not yet been empirically validated.

How Will We Know Which Future Is Emerging?

A lightweight quarterly radar for EAs, HR leaders and executive offices.



#	SIGNAL	WHAT TO OBSERVE	WHY IT MATTERS	A SHIFT WOULD SUGGEST
01	**EA job description language**	Share of openings asking for AI, risk, project or crisis-readiness skills	How employers are redefining the role	Rising AI and risk language: the high-AI futures, 01 and 02
02	**Executive-to-EA support ratio**	Executives supported per EA; centralized support models	Consolidation and portfolio widening	Rising ratios: movement toward 01, the Lean Executive Office
03	**AI agent autonomy**	Which executive tasks agents may complete without sign-off	Tracks Axis A directly	Expanding autonomy: movement up the matrix
04	**Regional travel disruption**	Frequency of replanning, cancellations and exceptions	Tracks Axis B directly	A persistent rise: movement toward 02 or 04
05	**Identity and data governance controls**	New identity-verification policies and AI-tool restrictions	What can safely be delegated	Mature controls under disruption favour 02 over 04
06	**EA decision-making authority**	Budget, project ownership and decisions EAs may escalate	Whether new value is recognized	Growing authority: a strategic path. Shrinking: role compression

STEP 1
Set a baseline first

STEP 2
Monitor quarterly

STEP 3
Update scenario assumptions annually

A proposed monitoring framework — not a completed longitudinal study. No signal values have yet been collected.

Preparing for 2030 Starts Now

VALID IN ALL FOUR

Three stages that are useful in all four scenarios — no need to bet on a single future.

DAYS 01–30

Map the work

Inventory recurring EA responsibilities.

Identify repetition, sensitivity and decision risk.

Separate what can be automated from what needs human judgment.

OUTPUT

EA task + risk map

DAYS 31–60

Run controlled AI pilots

Test approved AI tools, with human review.

Improve briefing and coordination processes.

Evaluate accuracy, time savings and risks.

OUTPUT

Quality and time baseline

DAYS 61–90

Build resilience

Create disruption playbooks.

Define verification controls.

Establish escalation pathways.

Identify future skills and training needs.

OUTPUT

Executive office protocol

→ A more capable, resilient executive office

For organizations: sponsor the process, define permissions and measure outcomes — not just activity.

Bar heights show sequence and accumulation, not effort or time.

The EA of 2030 may be valued less for managing the calendar

and more for managing uncertainty around decisions.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE · GEOPOLITICAL UNCERTAINTY · HUMAN DECISION

THE RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Test the proposition against **evidence**, not optimism.

Sources and Research Notes

Published external research underpins current-state claims. Scenarios and frameworks are original ProAssist Solutions hypotheses.

01	**World Economic Forum.** *The Future of Jobs Report 2025.* January 2025. weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025	Page 05
02	**International Labour Organization (with NASK).** *Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure.* ILO Working Paper 140, May 2025; summarized in the research brief *Generative AI and jobs: A 2025 update.* doi.org/10.54394/HETP0387 · ilo.org/publications/generative-ai-and-jobs-2025-update	Page 05
03	**Microsoft WorkLab.** *2026 Work Trend Index: Agents, human agency, and the opportunity for every organization.* May 2026. Survey of 20,000 AI-using knowledge workers in 10 markets, 18 Feb – 7 Apr 2026. microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index	Page 05
04	**International Monetary Fund.** *Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia.* October 2026. imf.org/en/Publications/REO	Page 10
05	**UAE Artificial Intelligence Office.** *UAE National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence 2031.* ai.gov.ae	Page 07
06	**Saudi Data & AI Authority (SDAIA).** *National Strategy for Data & AI.* sdaia.gov.sa	Page 07
07	**Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internet Crime Complaint Center.** Public Service Announcement on senior U.S. officials impersonated in a malicious messaging campaign. May 2025. ic3.gov	Page 11

PUBLISHED EXTERNAL RESEARCH

WEF occupational outlook · ILO GenAI exposure index · Microsoft Frontier finding · IMF regional outlook · UAE and Saudi national AI strategies · FBI impersonation advisory

PROPOSED BY PROASSIST SOLUTIONS

Work-redesign model · geopolitical cascade · risk-and-control architecture · scenario matrix and four 2030 scenarios · five-capability framework · early-warning signals · 90-day roadmap

Research notes. All external findings are global or national in scope; no region-specific EA employment forecast is claimed. Verify dates, titles and links, and update evidence immediately before onward publication. Map boundaries from Natural Earth (public domain), simplified for illustration.

ProAssist SOLUTIONS

Beyond the Calendar

A ProAssist Solutions strategic foresight study · November 2026

AI can execute the plan.

The question for 2030 is who keeps the executive moving when it breaks.



ProAssist
SOLUTIONS

BEYOND THE CALENDAR

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT · NOVEMBER 2026